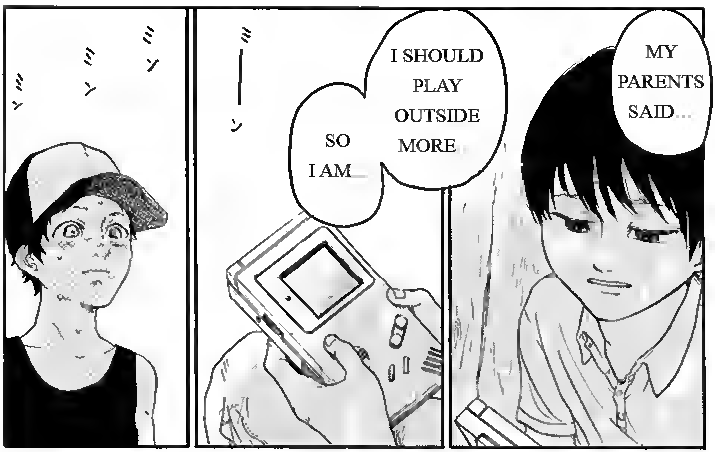
IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

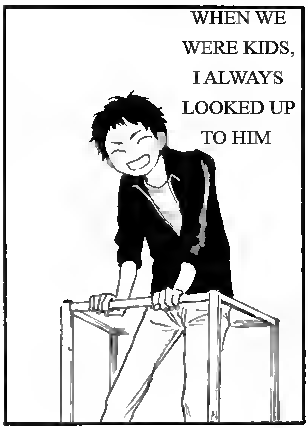
CHAPTER 1: HIDE AND HARU

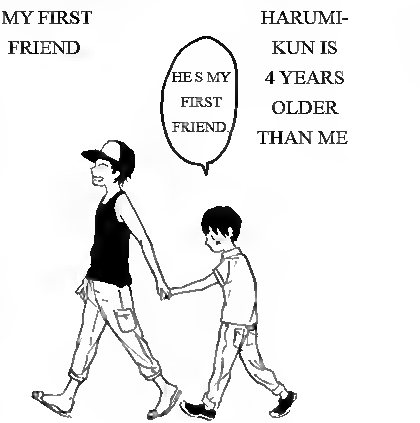
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

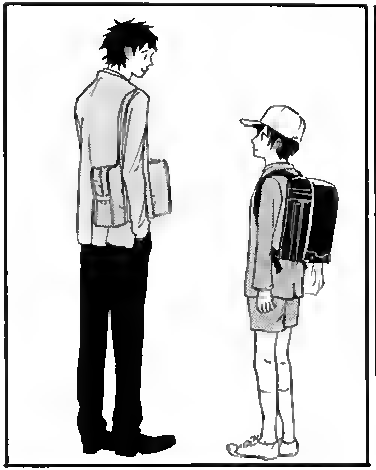

MY PARENTS SAID...
I SHOULD PLAY OUTSIDE MORE
SO I AM...

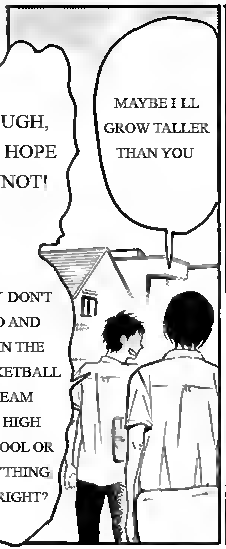
ARE YOU DUMB?
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS, DO YOU?
HUH?
WAIT, WHAT ARE YOU
PLAY OUTSIDE MEANS MOVE AROUND AND BE ACTIVE
I... I DON'T...
I JUST MOVED HERE

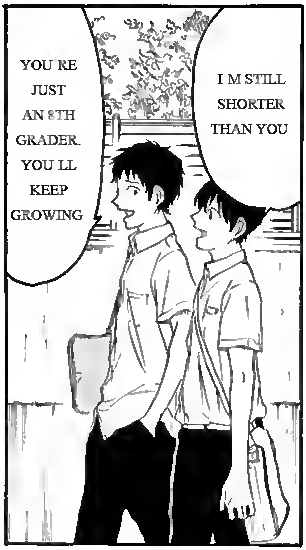
I'LL HANG OUT WITH YOU!


WHEN WE WERE KIDS, I ALWAYS LOOKED UP TO HIM


MY FIRST FRIEND
HARUMI-KUN IS 4 YEARS OLDER THAN ME
HE S MY FIRST FRIEND




UGH, I HOPE NOT!
MAYBE I LL GROW TALLER THAN YOU
HEY DON'T GO AND JOIN THE BASKETBALL TEAM IN HIGH SCHOOL OR ANYTHING ALRIGHT?


YOU RE JUST AN 8TH GRADER. YOU LL KEEP GROWING
I M STILL SHORTER THAN YOU

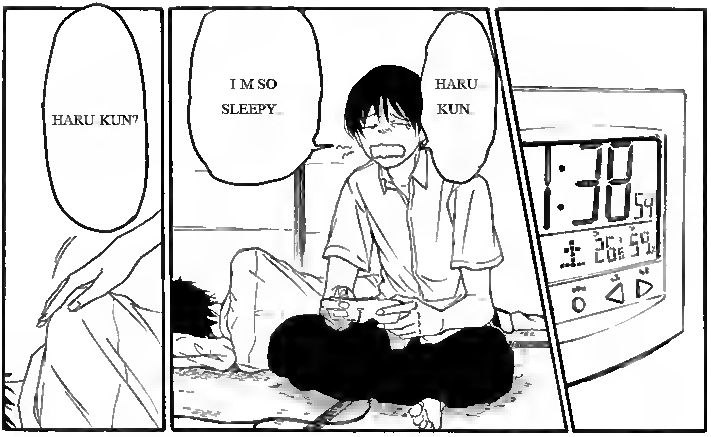
HIDE
DID YOU GET TALLER AGAIN?

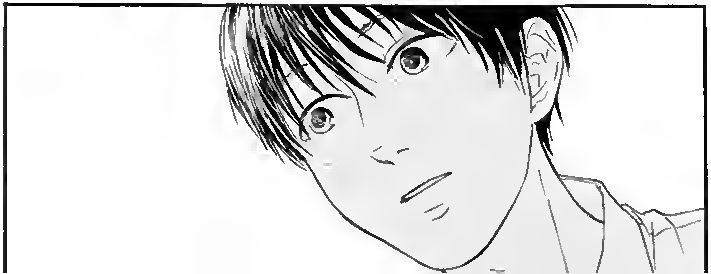
RIGHT YOU RE HOUSE-SITTING TODAY
BUT IT S A TRIP FOR TWO SO YOU KNOW
SHE S SERIOUSLY LUCKY WITH LOTTERIES
YOUR MOM WON A TRIP TO OKINAWA? AWESOME!
YEAH SO
SO HOW COME YOU DIDN'T INVITE YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
I VE GOT NOTHING TO DO ALL DAY WHY DON'T YOU STAY OVER?

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WONDERING ABOUT THAT ACTUALLY

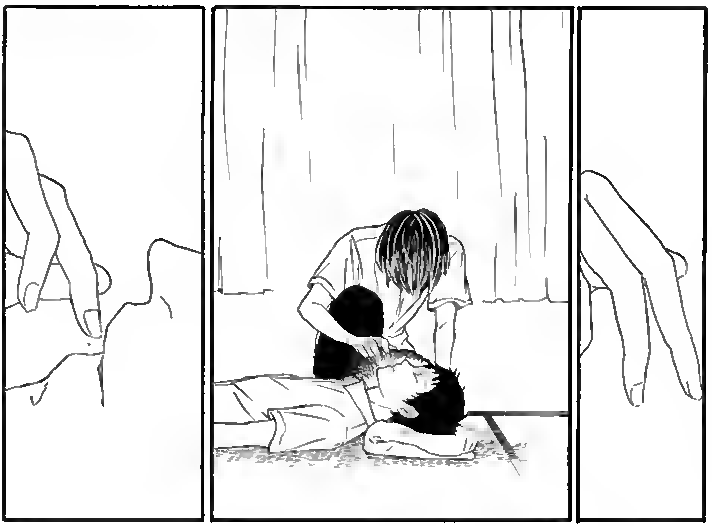
WHAT, YOU'RE MOCKING ME BECAUSE I'M 17 AND I STILL DON'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND!?
WHAT'S UP WITH YOU? GOING ON ABOUT A GIRLFRIEND!

NO NO SORRY THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT
WHAT, DO YOU HAVE ONE?
WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING AT?

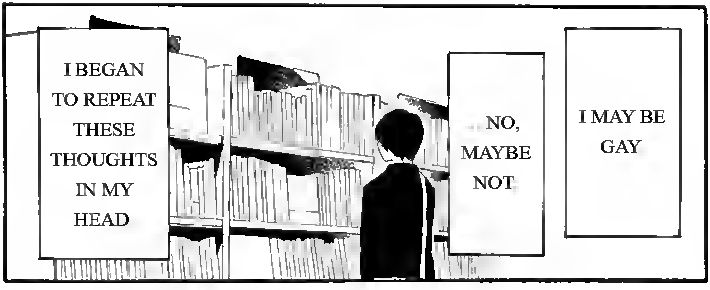

HARU KUN?
I M SO SLEEPY
HARU KUN

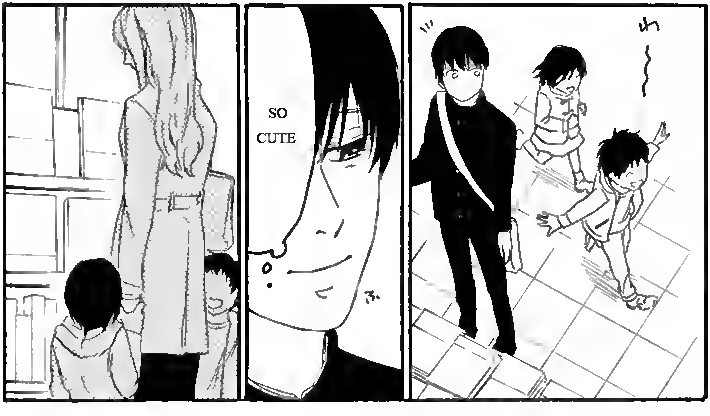


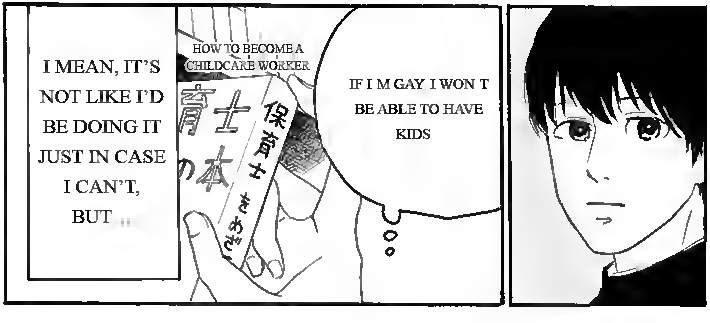
WHY...

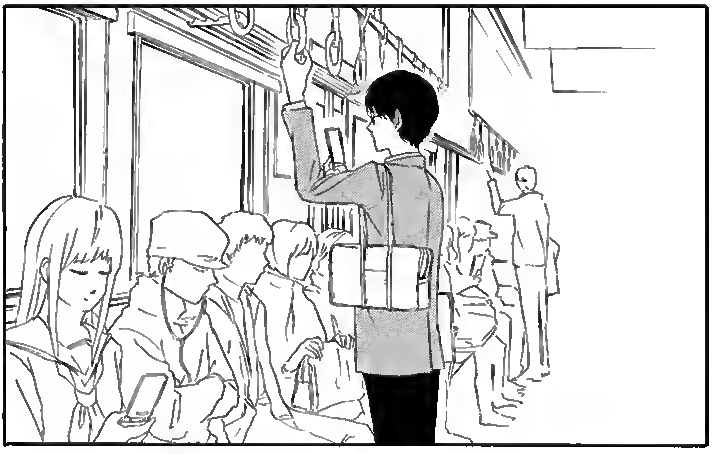


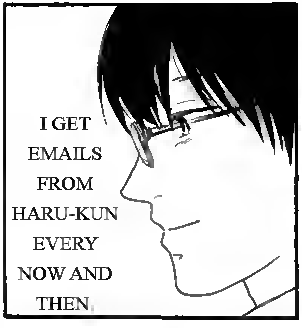
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO JUST BE FRIENDS
HOW COULD I DO THIS TO A FRIEND
I'M SORRY, HARU-KUN


I BEGAN TO REPEAT THESE THOUGHTS IN MY HEAD
... NO, MAYBE NOT
I MAY BE GAY


SO CUTE


I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I'D BE DOING IT JUST IN CASE I CAN'T, BUT ...
HOW TO BECOME A CHILDCARE WORKER
保育士
IF I M GAY I WON T BE ABLE TO HAVE KIDS

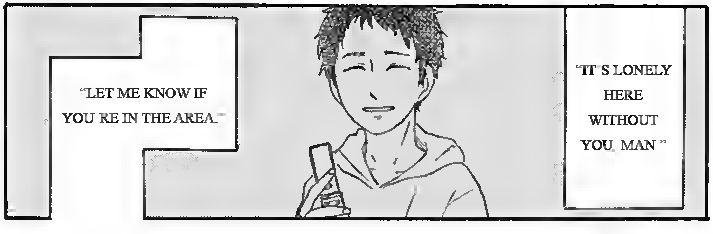


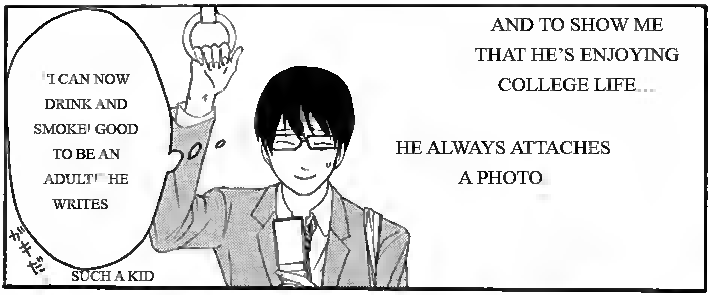


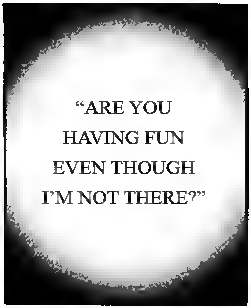
HARU-KUN GOT INTO A COLLEGE IN HIS HOME TOWN.

AS FOR ME, JUST BEFORE STARTING HIGH SCHOOL...

WE HAD TO MOVE TO KANTO BECAUSE OF MY PARENTS' JOBS.




"I CAN NOW DRINK AND SMOKE! GOOD TO BE AN ADULT!" HE WRITES
SUCH A KID
AND TO SHOW ME THAT HE'S ENJOYING COLLEGE LIFE...
HE ALWAYS ATTACHES A PHOTO



THE DISTANCE MAY BE JUST WHAT I NEED.
HE'D BE ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT.
BECAUSE IF I WAS THERE WITH HARU-KUN...
TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'M RELIEVED.

THAT'S WHAT I USED TO THINK, AND YET...

“I’M GETTING MARRIED.”

I CHANGED MY EMAIL ADDRESS.
MY FIRST LOVE ENDED WHEN I WAS 20.

WORK, HOME, THEN BACK TO WORK AGAIN...

WEEKENDS GO BY SO FAST, EVENING COMES IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

"ENCOUNTER SOMEONE SPECIAL"...
I DON'T SEE THAT HAPPENING

COME ON
FORGET ABOUT HIM ALREADY
EVEN IF I MET SOMEONE AMAZING, I'D UNCONSCIOUSLY COMPARE THEM.
...HIDE?
ARE THESE TOO PLAIN FOR A 25 YEAR OLD?
HMM
WHY...

YOU'RE HIDE, AREN'T YOU!?
ALL THIS TIME...
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FORGET...
HA...
HARU-KUN?
IS THAT YOU?

I JUST COULDN'T HELP BEING HAPPY TO SEE HIM.

FORGOTTEN MEMORIES AND FEELINGS POUR FORTH,
HASTENING THE FLOW OF TIME

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

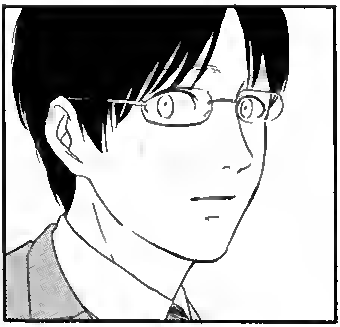
CHAPTER 2: REUNION

I LIKE SITTING AT THE COUNTER
IT FEELS SOMEHOW SPECIAL, DOESN'T IT?
YOU SMOKE?
OH
YES OCCASIONALLY
SORRY
I APOLOGI—
QUIT BEING SO FORMAL I M NOT YOUR BOSS

YEAH SO SHOW SOME RESPECT HUH?
A SECTION CHIEF REALLY?
NO WONDER I M A SECTION CHIEF NOW YOU KNOW
YOU DO SEEM LIKE MY SUPERVISOR THOUGH
NOT BEING ABLE TO EAT MINTS IS ALL IN THE PAST!
HEY...
THEY RE MENTHOLS YOU OKAY WITH THAT?
CAN I HAVE ONE?
HUH?
BUT THEY ALL FEEL SO FRESH
NO OFFENCE MEANT!
HA HA はは
SOME THINGS CHANGED, SOME DIDN T...

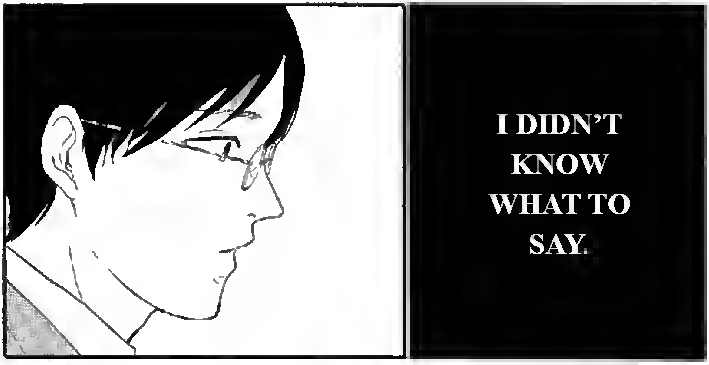
YOU OKAY?
?
ゴホっ
COUGH
I QUIT WHEN MY DAUGHTER WAS BORN.
けほ
COUGH
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVEN'T SMOKED FOR A LONG TIME.

WELL YEAH
YOU CHOSE A FAMILY RESTAURANT BECAUSE YOU NEED TO BE BACK EARLY
I SEE... SO YOU'VE GOT A DAUGHTER.
I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED THAT HE HAS A KID NOW
HERE'S YOUR ORDER
BY THE WAY...
I GOT SO OVERJOYED FOR NOTHING...
YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING?
JUST WHAT WAS I HOPING FOR...?

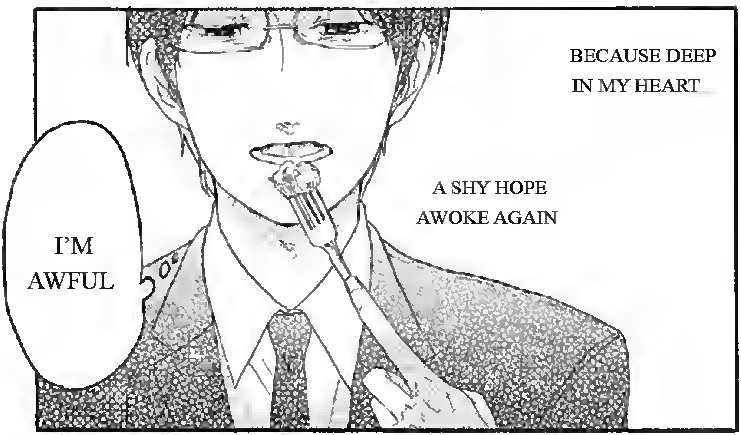


LAST YEAR, MY WIFE...
PASSED AWAY.

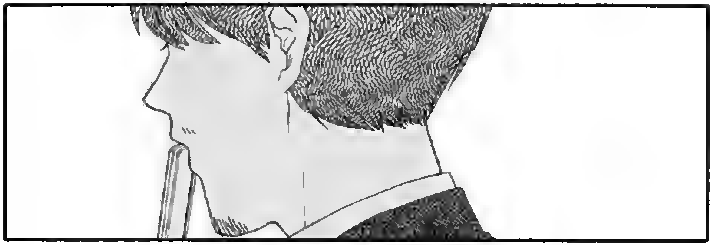
HUH.
CAR ACCIDENT.
SO IT'S JUST ME AND MY KID.



I FELT LIKE IF I SAID "MY CONDOLENCES", IT WOULD SOUND INSINCERE.

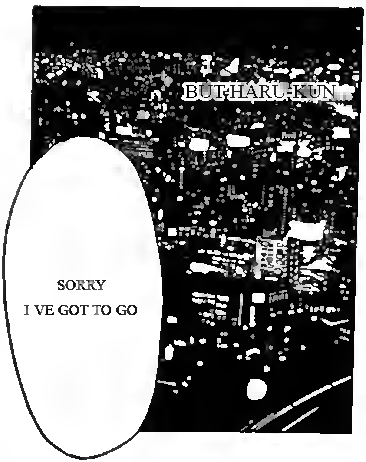


YOU...
IT FELT LIKE I LOST ALL FRIENDS IT WAS A SHOCK
I TRIED EMAILING BUT IT DIDN T GET TO YOU
YOU RE RIGHT
はは HA HA
YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED
IT WAS JUST...
HARU-KUN, WHO'S ALWAYS BEEN SO STRONG, NEEDED MY SUPPORT
BUT MAYBE....



WHEN I PICTURED HIM DEALING WITH EVERYTHING ALL ALONE...

MY CHEST TIGHTENED WITH SORROW

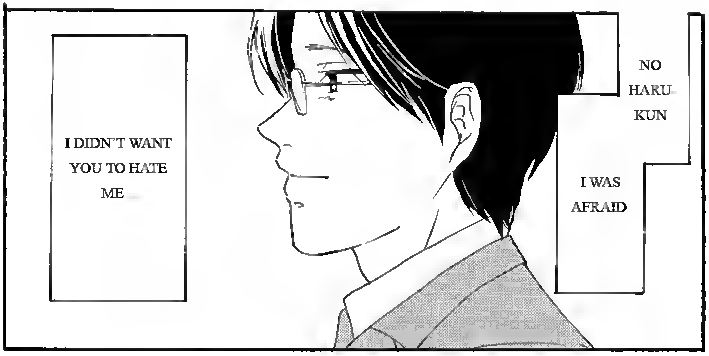


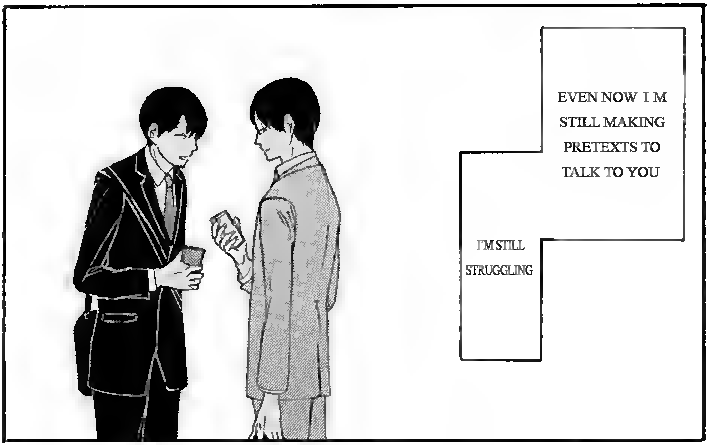
SEE YA!
YUP
LATER
BYE
HARU-KUN
COULD I HAVE SUPPORTED HARU-KUN?
I HADN'T CHANGED MY EMAIL ADDRESS?
HOW DIFFERENT WOULD EVERYTHING HAVE BEEN IF
CHOSE ME TO BE THE ONE TO LEAN ON ?

MAYBE HE JUST WANTED TO DROP ME A LINE
IT'S ALL JUST WISHFUL THINKING
BECOME A NURSERY TEACHER
保育士をめざす
WHAT COULD I DO?
SO HE S WORKING AND TAKING CARE OF HIS DAUGHTER?
HA
HARU-KUN!

WHAT IS IT?
EH?
LET'S
EXCHANGE EMAIL ADDRESSES
AH!
UH
BECAUSE

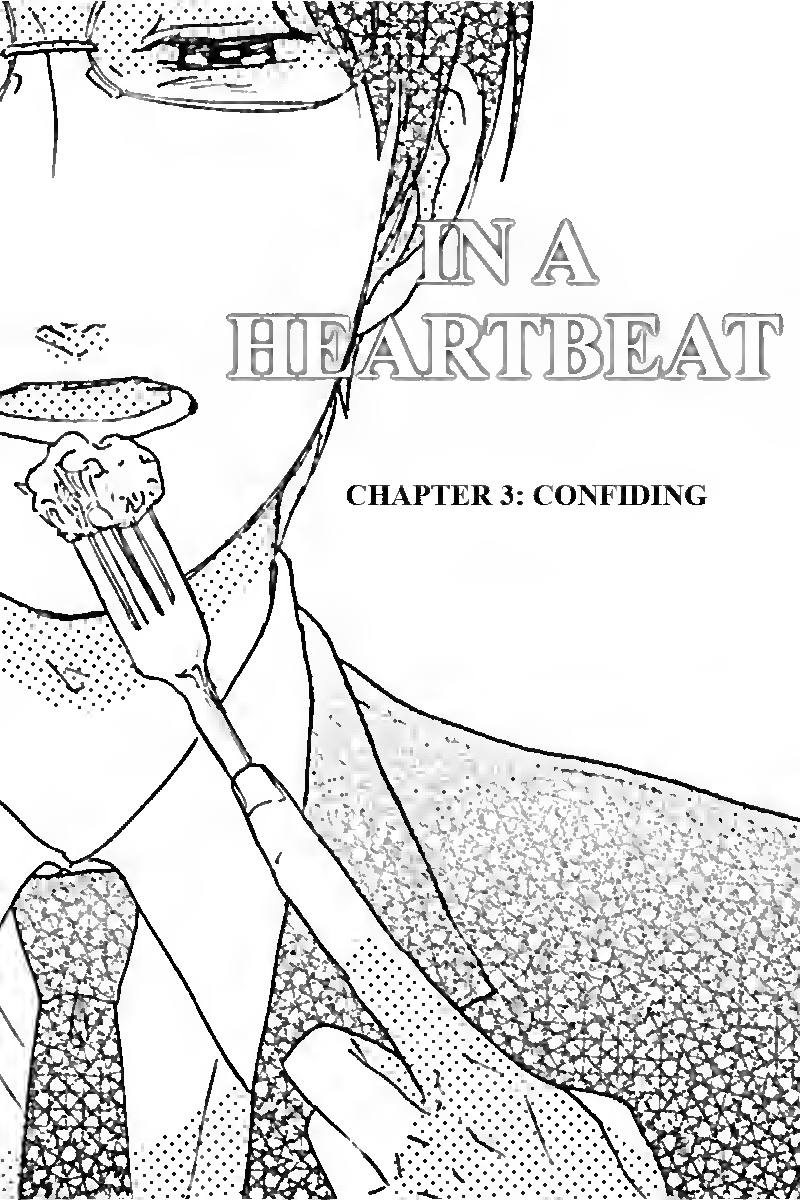
HUH? WELL, OKAY.
WITH YOU IF YOU DON'T MIND
I
NEED TO
DISCUSS SOMETHING
WHAT?
SURE
BUT IT'S WEIRD
YOU NEVER EMAILED ME BACK SO I THOUGHT
MAYBE YOU HATE EMAIL
YOU KNOW

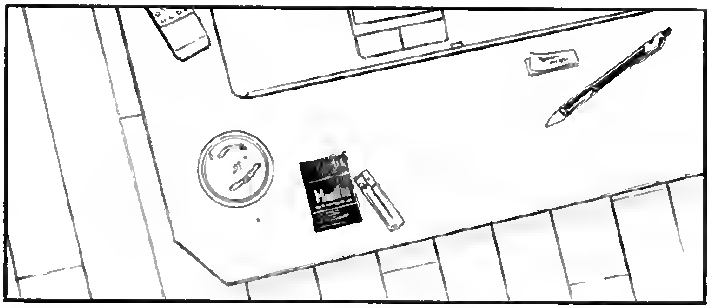


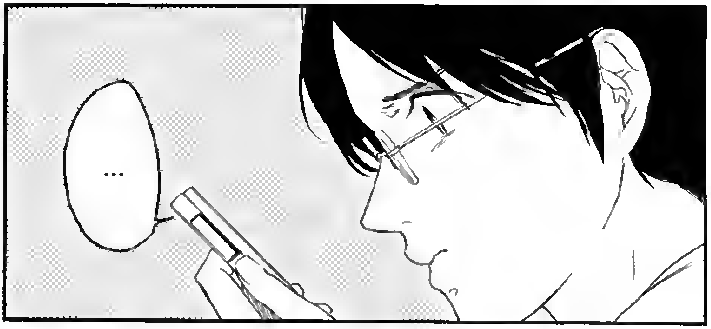


THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT UP MY OLD DILEMMA ABOUT BECOMING A NURSERY TEACHER.

URGED BY FATE, HIDE CROSSED THAT BRIDGE.
NOW THERE'S NO TURNING BACK


IN A
HEARTBEAT
CHAPTER 3: CONFIDING




...

UGH NO...
HAD SO MUCH FUN YESTERDAY! (*^_^*) LET S GO OUT FOR A DRINK AGAIN SOON!
NO NO NO
HOW ARE YOU IT WAS NICE TO SEE YOU YESTER...

迷 信

SEND ✉

IT WAS GREAT MEETING YOU AND HAVING
DINNER WITH YOU YESTERDAY I'D LIKE
TO ASK YOU FOR ADVICE ABOUT
SOMETHING, IF THAT WOULD BE OKAY
↵
I'M FREE ON THE WEEKENDS, SO
LET ME KNOW WHEN IS GOOD FOR YOU

WILL HE REPLY? I WONDER
HE LOOKS BETTER IN A SUIT THAN I THOUGHT
AND IT WAS SO CUTE
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT...
HARU LOST HIS REGIONAL ACCENT.

ぶっ
IT'S OKAY
WHEN DO YOU WANNA MEET? ⌒(e)⌒
⌒(ë)⌒
なんで?!
WHY?!!?
AND IT S SO SHORT!
WHAT S THAT EMOTICON
SUPPOSED TO BE?
A SEAGULL?
SEAGULL!?
AWESOME!
よっしゃあ
とにかく
IN ANY
CASE

HEYYY!
!

NOPE
HAD LUNCH YET?
LET S GET SOMETHING

HE HE
うはは

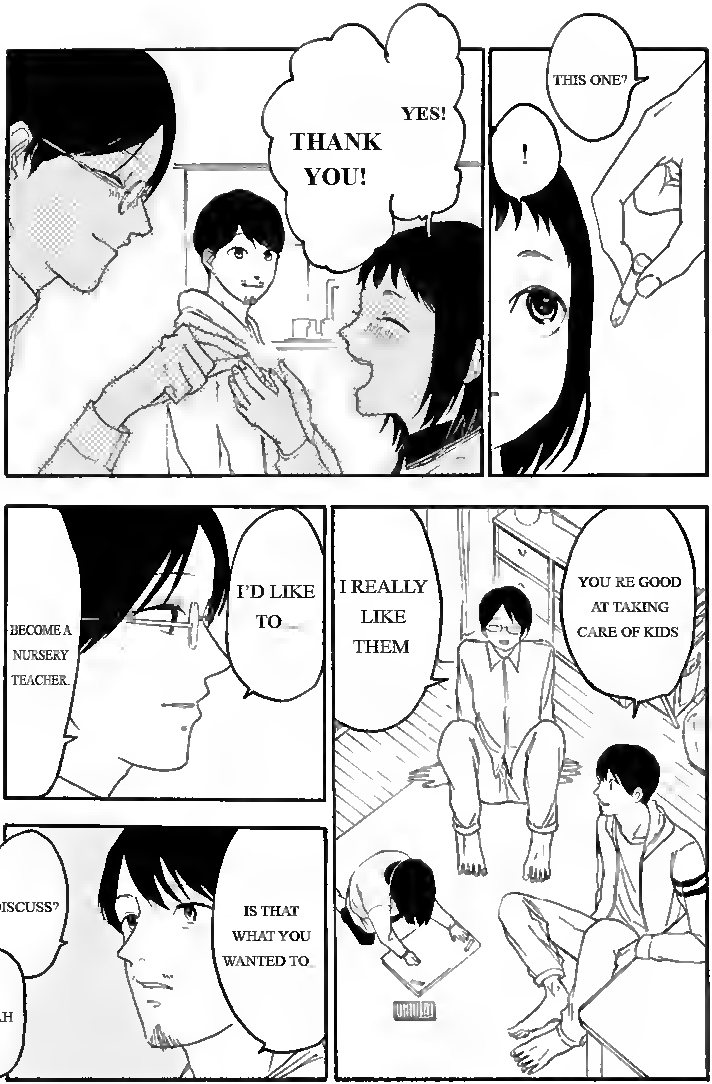
NO IT'S FINE
I VE GOT A LITTLE KID IT D BE EASIER FOR ME
NO! GOOD!
HUH!?
WHAT?
LET S BUY SOMETHING AND EAT AT MY PLACE.
WHAT IF HIS DAUGHTER DOESN T LIKE ME?
AS IF IT WASN T ENOUGH THAT I M NERVOUS GOING TO HIS HOUSE
BUT I M SURE SHE LL BE OKAY WITH YOU
MY DAUGHTER IS A BIT SHY OF STRANGERS
OH MAN...

202
KITAYAMA
北山
カチャ
DADDY!
YOU'RE BACK!
たたた
THERE S MY GIRL
HELLO
MINA?
SAY HELLO
…

WOW, HIS HOUSE IS SO TIDY.
I DIDN'T KNOW HE KNEW HOW TO DO HOUSE CHORES
MINA CAN YOU WIPE THE TABLE?
SURE!
CHILDREN ARE SO SWEET
CAN YOU SHOW ME WHERE IT IS?
DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?
THE BATHROOM
もじ
もじ
?

...
IS IT TASTY MINAMI?
UH HUH
THAT FATHERLY LOOK ON HIS FACE

WHAT A STRANGE FEELING
IT'S SO LOVELY BUT IT MAKES ME SAD TOO
MOMO-CHAN
WHAT ARE YOU DRAWING MINAMI CHAN?
きょろ
きょろ
UH HUH
UHM FROM THAT PREPURE ANIME?


YES!
THANK YOU!
THIS ONE?
!
I'D LIKE TO
BECOME A NURSERY TEACHER.
I REALLY LIKE THEM
YOU RE GOOD AT TAKING CARE OF KIDS
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANTED TO
DISCUSS?
YEAH

I CAME UP WITH THIS AS AN EXCUSE TO MEET HARU KUN AGAIN
BUT...
I WAS THINKING OF QUITTING MY JOB AND GETTING THE QUALIFICATIONS

IT'S ACTUALLY TRUE

WORKING WITH CHILDREN WOULD BE ONE POSSIBILITY

YOU SHOULD TRY IT
WHY DON T YOU DO IT?
HMM
YEAH
YOU RE ONLY WHAT 25?
YOU SHOULD GIVE IT A TRY NOW WHILE YOU CAN
IF THAT S THE JOB YOU REALLY WANT
SO THAT YOU WON T HAVE ANY REGRETS IN THE FUTURE RIGHT?

HEARING IT FROM YOU ...
MADE ME BELIEVE I CAN DO IT!
I THINK YOU RE RIGHT THANKS
OH!
YOU KNOW
WELL THAT S GOOD
HUH
IF YOU WERE A NURSERY TEACHER, I COULD HAVE YOU TAKE CARE OF MINA.

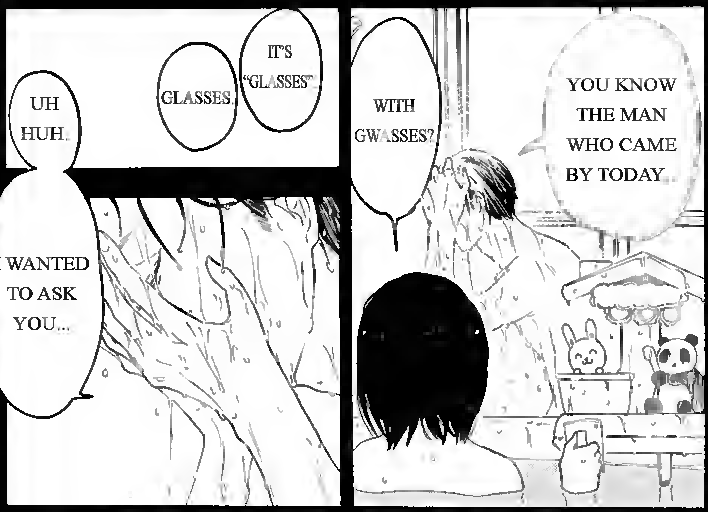
YOU CAN ASK ME ANY TIME!
I LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME WHEN I QUIT
AND IT S HARD FOR YOU TO RAISE HER ALONE RIGHT?
UHM THAT D BE REALLY GREAT BUT I D FEEL BAD ABOUT IT
!
...HE DIDN T REALLY MEAN IT?
AH
S-SORRY
...

I GOT HOME SO DEPRESSED
THAT EVENING.

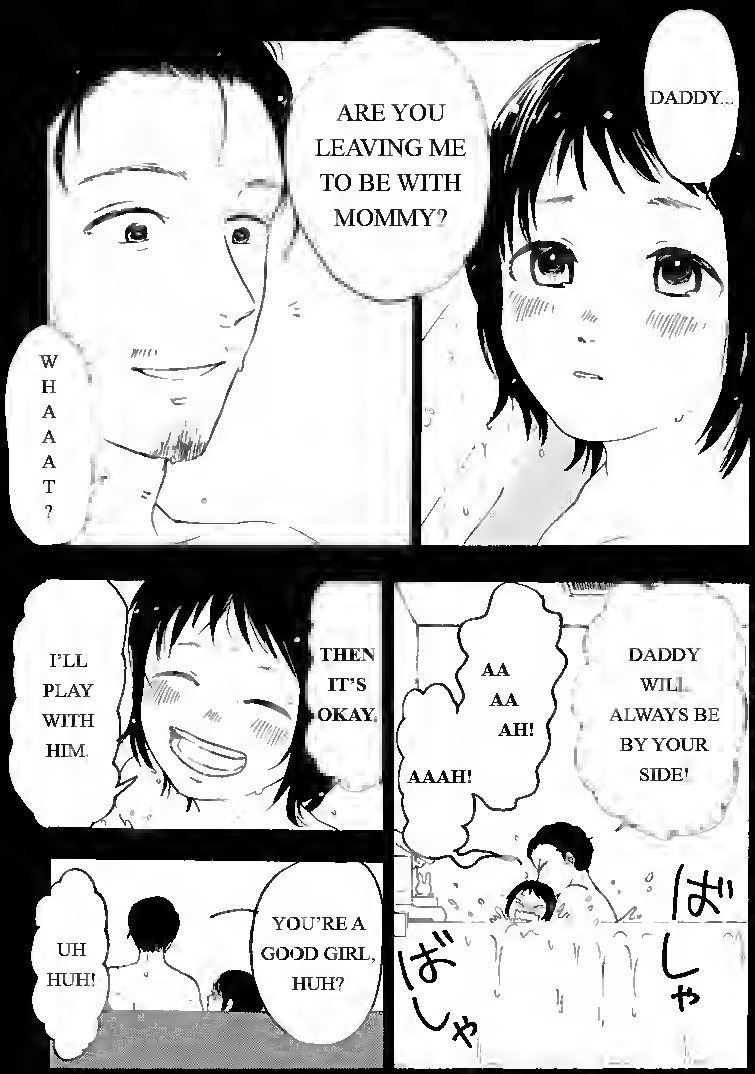
HARU-KUN CALLED TO MAKE A CERTAIN
“REQUEST” OF ME.

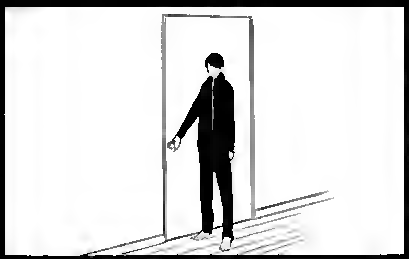
HIDE’S COURAGE WAS REWARDED BY A STREAK OF LIGHT
FALLING ON A BLOCKED PATH...

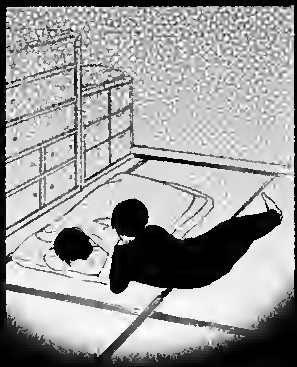
HMM?
HEY, MINA
CHAPTER 4: REQUEST


UH HUH.
GLASSES
IT'S "GLASSES"
I WANTED TO ASK YOU...
WITH GWASSES?
YOU KNOW THE MAN WHO CAME BY TODAY

IF YOU THINK YOU COULD BE FRIENDS WITH HIM?
HE'S DADDY'S FRIEND!
HA HA! NO, NO!
はは
HAVE NO FRIENDS?
DOES THAT MISTER...
HUH?
YOU DON'T MIND IF HE COMES OVER SOMETIMES?
WELL, IN THAT CASE...
I SEE.
IF HE'S DADDY'S FRIEND, MINA LIKES HIM, TOO!


DADDY...
ARE YOU LEAVING ME TO BE WITH MOMMY?
WHAAAAT?
DADDY WILL ALWAYS BE BY YOUR SIDE!
AA AA AH!
AAAH!
ばしゃ
ばしゃ
THEN IT'S OKAY.
I'LL PLAY WITH HIM.
YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL, HUH?
UH HUH!





HIDEAKI
NISHIOKA
西岡 秀陽
090

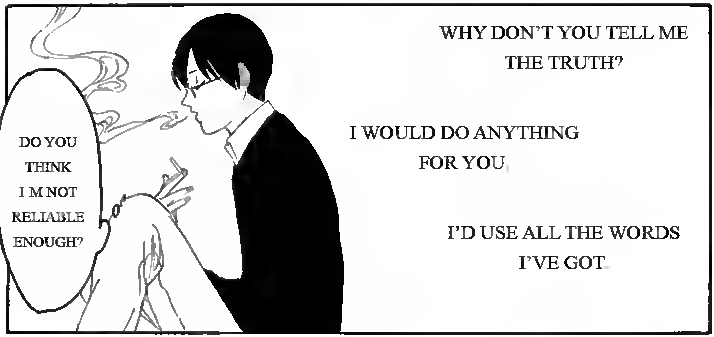
COME OVER FROM TIME TO TIME AND PLAY WITH MINAMI-CHAN AS HER "FRIEND"

IN OTHER WORDS, HE WANTED ME TO BABYSIT FOR HIM.

UHM, HARU-KUN?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
I DON T QUITE KNOW IT S JUST
HUH?
WHY?
YOUR VOICE? MAYBE
YOU SOUND A BIT DOWN

I GAINED WEIGHT RECENTLY
YOU CAN TELL? OKAY, THE TRUTH IS
IT S JUST AGE I GUESS
AHH, YOU RE NOT SO YOUNG ANYMORE
I FEEL SO RUN DOWN
HA HA!
LATER
WELL, I LL BE GOING
OKAY
I D RATHER HEAR THAT FROM A PRETTY ACTRESS!
HARU KUN, FOR MEN LIFE STARTS AT 30
HA HA!
GOOD NIGHT
TAKE CARE
UH HUH

HARU-
KUN...
WHY...



HE DOESN'T FEEL AS CLOSE TO ME AS I DO TO HIM

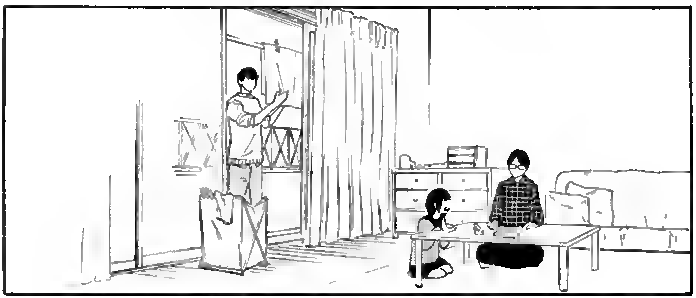
IT'S LIKE THERE'S A WALL BETWEEN US

THE NIGHT GROWS LATE AS HIDE FRUITLESSLY TRIES TO ANSWER HIS OWN QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 5: LATE FALL

BE MORE POLITE TO ADULTS
MINA
'SUP!
'SUP? COME ON IN
I'VE STARTED COMING TO HARU-KUN'S HOUSE
ON SATURDAYS TO "HELP AROUND THE HOUSE"

BUT IT'S NOT QUITE
WHAT I WANT.



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NO, DON'T WORRY!
IS THERE ANYTHING...
NO, I'M FINE
HUH?
HARU-KUN, NEED SOME HELP WITH THAT?
BUT THEN...
HE'S DOING ALL THE HOUSE CHORES
MEANWHILE, I'M ONLY PLAYING WITH MINA-CHAN.
AM I
AM I BEING OF ANY HELP AT ALL?

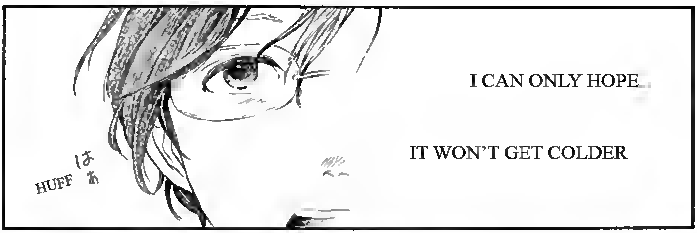
I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE ANY LESS HOUSEWORK
FFFFF
ふぅ
...
OF COURSE YOU ARE
WHILE I'M DOING HOUSE CHORES
TO LEAVE MINA ALONE
YOU SEE, I'M REALLY SCARED
BUT
STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT

I APPRECIATE IT.
I CAN FINALLY RELAX BECAUSE YOU'RE WATCHING HER.
GLAD TO HEAR THAT
REALLY?
HARU-KUN
ALRIGHTY. I SHOULD GET SOME RICE READY FOR COOKING

ARE YOU BEING HONEST WITH ME?

ON A SUNDAY? TAKE IT EASY AND GET SOME REST!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
はは
HA HA
YUP SEE YOU THEN!
AH OKAY SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

HUFF
はあ
BUT
IT'S SO COLD
NOT SO COLD THAT I CAN SEE MY BREATH
YET



HIDE MET WITH GENTLE DENIAL. HARU SEEMED TO HAVE ERECTED AN INVISIBLE WALL AROUND HIS HEART.

CHAPTER 6: MIDNIGHT VISITOR

HUH?
DADDY YOU HAVE A FEVER?
DON T WORRY I M FINE
37.4
REALLY!
REALLY?
I M OKAY BECAUSE DADDY S REALLY STRONG!
YOU NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR!
MY TEMPERATURE S JUST A LITTLE HIGH

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WILL YOU BE OKAY SLEEPING ALONE?
BUT I LL SLEEP IN A SEPARATE ROOM TONIGHT
UH HUH
RIGHT BECAUSE YOU RE STRONG JUST LIKE DADDY
MINA WON T GET SICK!
BUT I DON'T WANT YOU CATCHING A BUG FROM ME
THANKS
GO LIE DOWN DADDY!
AND THE TV I KNOW THAT!
SWITCH OFF THE LIGHTS
I LL BE CAREFUL
HA HA
はは
OR YOU'LL CATCH A COLD!
DON T SLEEP UNCOVERED!

I'LL JUST MAKE BREAKFAST
I'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP ON DOING THE LAUNDRY
OH, WORK
COUGH
ゴホ
HUFF
はあ
DANG
WORST CASE SCENARIO I'LL LEAVE EARLY
I'LL SORT OUT THE MORNING STUFF AT LEAST
AND MEDICINE
...
AM I OUT OF
COOLING PADS?
はあ
HUFF

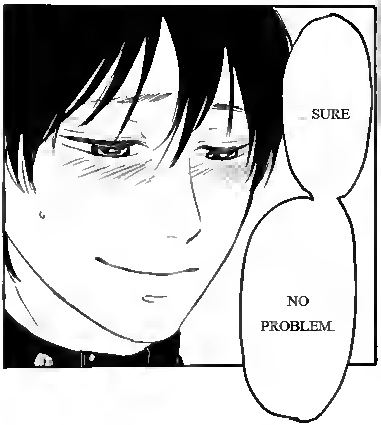
コチッ コチッ…
コチッ
コチッ
6
…
WATER…
ぎゅるるる…
AH, DOESN T MATTER
やっぱ
どーでも
いい
PANT
は
PANT
は
HUH?
OH!
ピン
DING
DONG
ポン

ぽた
PITTER PATTER
たたた
!
MI—
MINA?
THE DOOR
NAH, I LOCKED
UGH
MI
MINA
MI
NA!?

HL..
...DE?
HUFF

WHY DIDN'T YOU ASK ME TO COME!?
I GOT WORRIED THINKING YOU HAD A BAD CASE OF THE FLU!
SAYING YOU WERE DYING OF FEVER!
MINA-CHAN GAVE ME A CALL, YOU KNOW!?
YOU ASK ME TO HELP YOU OUT BUT THEN YOU WON'T EVEN LET ME!
I DON T UNDERSTAND YOU!

HA HA
YOU RE RIGHT
I DON T KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING
...
I M SORRY



I FELT WE BECAME A LITTLE CLOSER.

IT WASN'T JUST AFFECTION, BUT TRUE CONCERN.
HIDE'S HONEST DISPLAY OF EMOTION CHANGED THE PRESENT.

CHAPTER 7: AWESOME WEEKEND

MY EVERYDAY LIFE'S
TERRIFIC NOW.

THE WEEKENDS ARE THE
BEST DAYS EVER.

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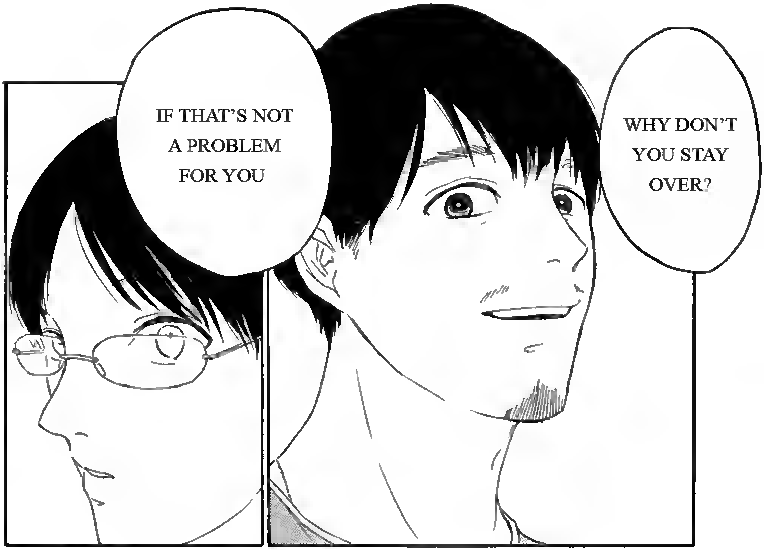
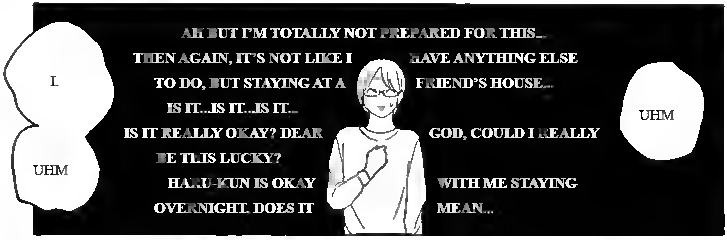
IT S A BOARD GAME!
OH! I HAVEN'T SEEN THIS IN AGES!
人生ゲーム
WHAT GAME?
HIDE-KUN! LET S PLAY A GAME!
LET S PLAY!
YEAH IT S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I PLAYED ONE
OH
WELL IT S QUITE LATE
WE HAD DINNER LATER THAN USUAL
LET'S PLAY, LET'S PLAY!
MINA PROBABLY JUST WANTS TO SPIN THE WHEEL
I FOUND IT STUFFED IN A CLOSET
やる
やる
AH
あ

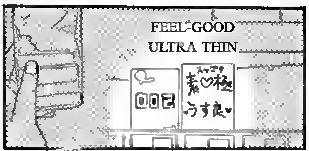

IF THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM FOR YOU
WHY DON'T YOU STAY OVER?

HUH?

UHM
I SAID YOU COULD STAY OVER.
HM?
WHAT DID YOU SAY?


I
UHM
AH BUT I'M TOTALLY NOT PREPARED FOR THIS...
THEN AGAIN, IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO, BUT STAYING AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE...
IS IT...IS IT...IS IT...
IS IT REALLY OKAY? DEAR GOD, COULD I REALLY BE THIS LUCKY?
HA..U-KUN IS OKAY WITH ME STAYING OVERNIGHT. DOES IT MEAN...
UHM

WAS IT JUST A PRETEXT TO DRINK?
TO THINK I GOT SO HYPED UP
ぼくのかってにとは…
GET ME SOME BOOZE TOO OKAY?
YOU'LL HAVE TO RUN OUT AND BUY A CHANGE OF UNDERWEAR, WON'T YOU?


FEEL GOOD ULTRA THIN

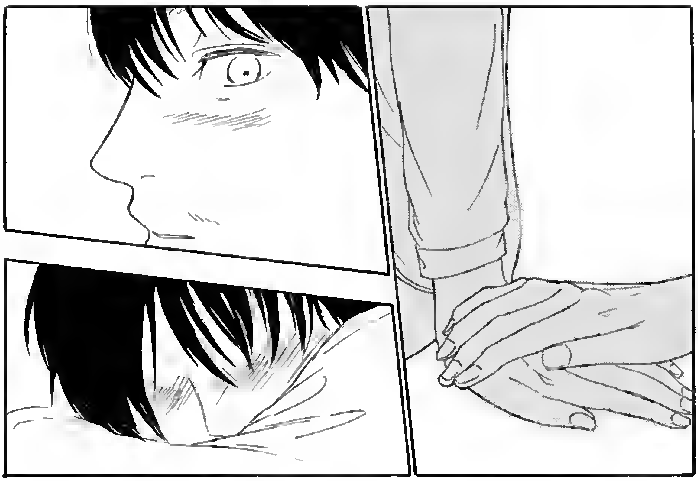
NO, THAT'S SILLY
ないない
はははは

STARE
じ

HE NEVER GOES DRINKING WITH HIS COLLEAGUES
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, HE DOESN'T GET TO DRINK OFTEN

HEH
ふふ
I M FINE
ARE YOU DONE IN ALREADY?
HEEEY!
HIDE?
WHO S TOYO-CHAN?
BUT TOYO-CHAN REALLY COULD DRINK!
NOT LIKE I M A STRONG DRINKER EITHER
YOU GET DRUNK EASILY HUH?
HA HA
はは
TOYOKO MY WIFE

WE STOPPED DRINKING TOGETHER.
BUT WHEN MINA WAS BORN...
HA HA
SHE'D DRINK BEER, WINE, SAKE ANYTHING
IT WAS SO VERY...
...
THE LOOK ON HARU-KUN'S FACE THAT I HADN'T SEEN BEFORE
THE WOMAN I NEVER KNEW THAT MAKES HIM LOOK SO WISTFUL
PAINFUL FOR ME.

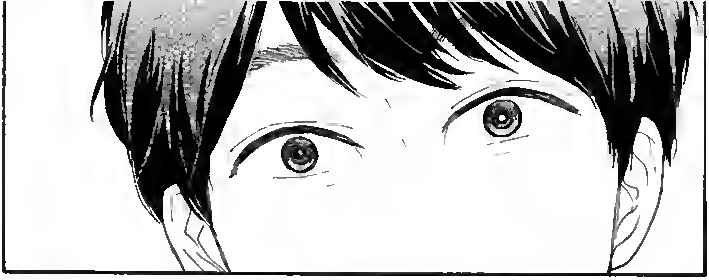


HIDE?

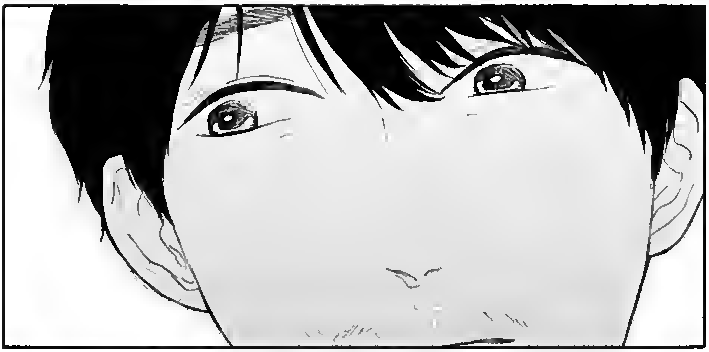
UHM... HIDE?
YOU FEELING SICK?
WHAT S WRONG?

WHAT HAVE I DONE...?

IT WASN'T THE ALCOHOL HIDE'S FEELINGS COULDN'T BE RESTRAINED AND HIS BODY MOVED ON ITS OWN...

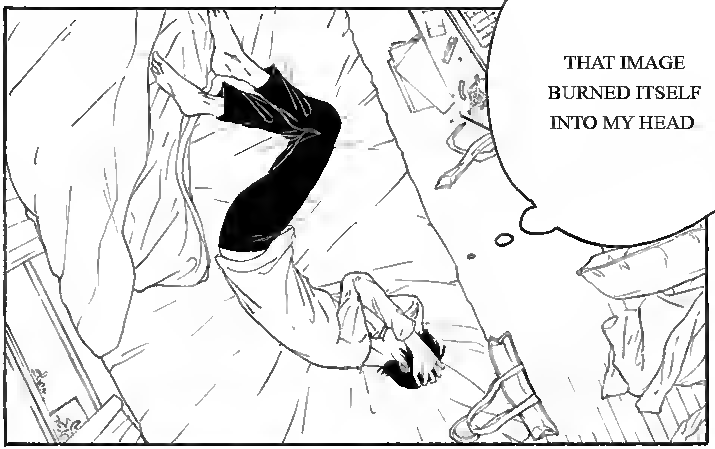


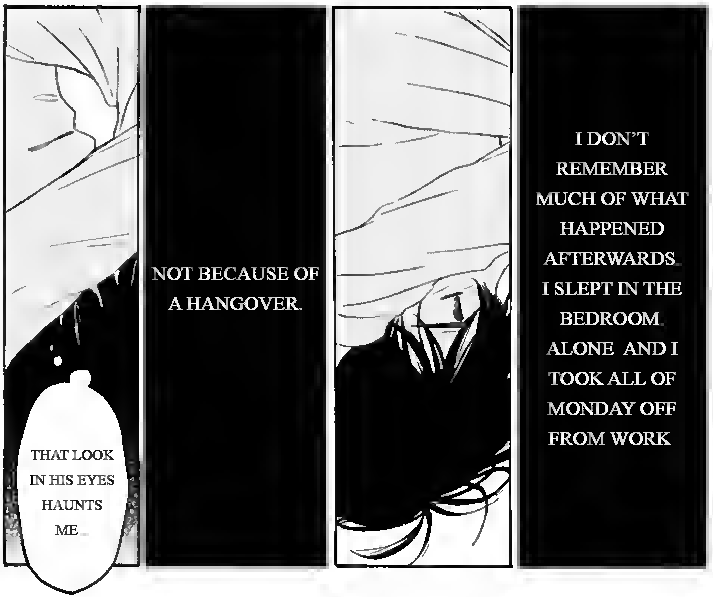
HARU-KUN...

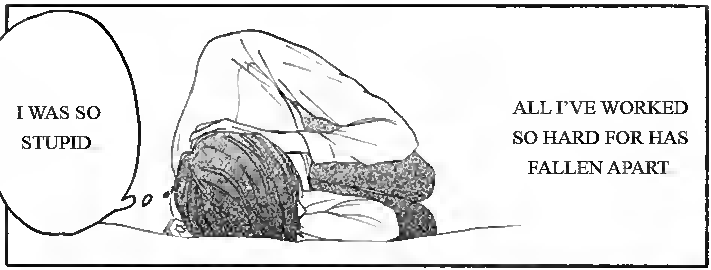


AVERTED HIS EYES.

CHAPTER 8: COMPLICATIONS




I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS. I SLEPT IN THE BEDROOM. ALONE. AND I TOOK ALL OF MONDAY OFF FROM WORK.
NOT BECAUSE OF A HANGOVER.
THAT LOOK IN HIS EYES HAUNTS ME.



IT CAN'T BE UNDONE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TORTURE MYSELF OVER IT.

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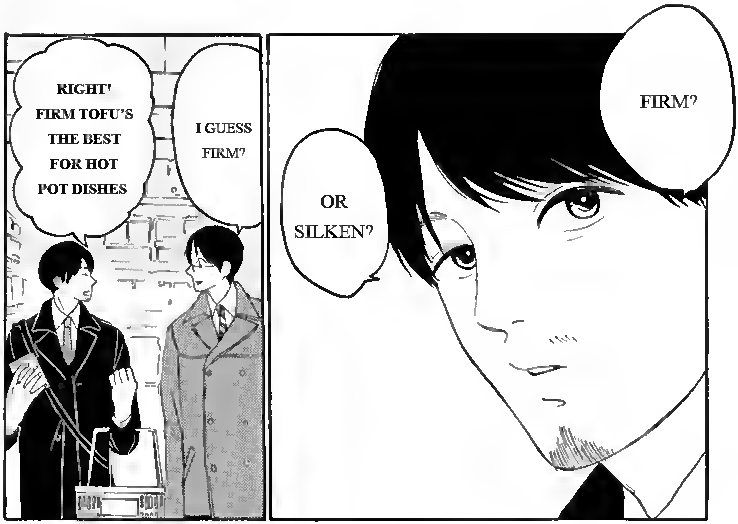
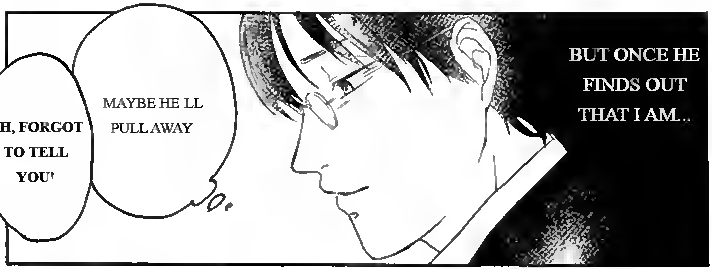
I M
HOPEFUL
WHY?
WHY DID
HE ?
I FEEL SICK
AND ALSO
FILLED WITH
DREAD
INBOX
ALL MAIL
HARUMI KITAYAMA
受信ボックス
すべてのメ
北山 晴美
Re

A FEW DAYS LATER.



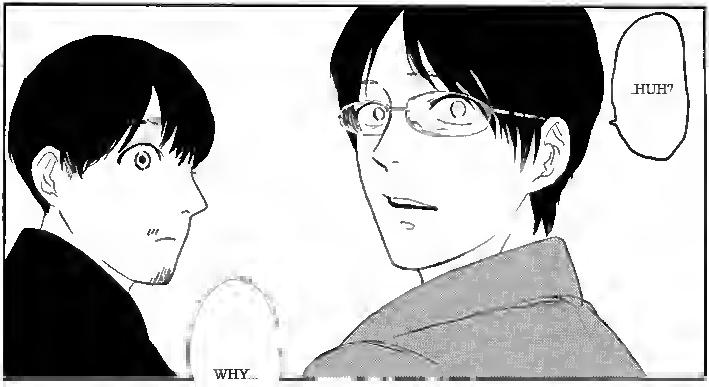
I WANTED TO MAKE HOT POT FOR A LONG TIME
BUT IT S NO FUN WITH JUST TWO PEOPLE.
HEY WHAT ABOUT THE MEAT? PORK?
HARU KUN SEEMS TO BE ACTING NORMAL
HARU KUN HASN T SAID A WORD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED
I M HONESTLY HAPPY
BUT
IT MAKES ME AFRAID
WHAT S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD?
HARU KUN

I GUESS SO
YEAH
WON T RICE BE ENOUGH THOUGH?
TO CAP IT OFF?
OOOH! WE FORGOT UDON NOODLES!
YOU'RE REALLY NOT NERVOUS AROUND ME?
HARU-KUN
MAYBE YOU RE JUST NOT SURE
WHETHER OR NOT I M THAT WAY


BUT ONCE HE FINDS OUT THAT I AM...
MAYBE HE LL PULL AWAY
OH, FORGOT TO TELL YOU!

I GOT OFF WORK EARLY TODAY
SO I ALREADY TOOK MINA HOME
AH
WELL, THEN WE SHOULD HURRY BACK

HIDEAKI!

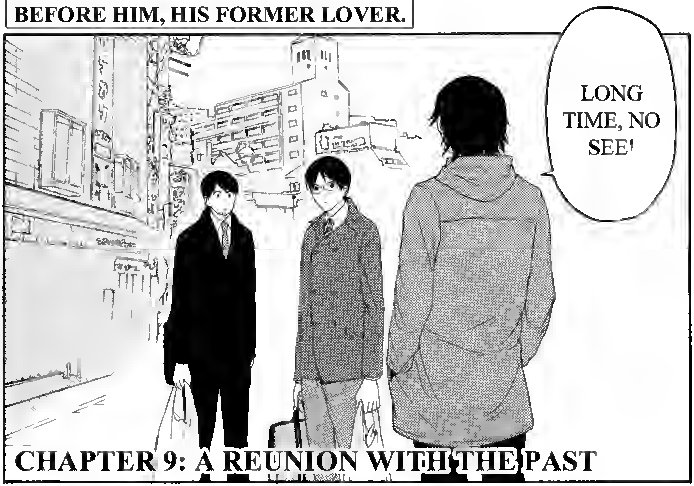


RUNNING INTO A GUY I BROKE UP WITH SIX MONTHS AGO...

AT THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME.

REUNIONS DON'T ONLY RESULT IN HAPPINESS.
SOMETIMES THEY BRING TROUBLE.

BESIDE HIM IS HIS CURRENT LOVE.
BEFORE HIM, HIS FORMER LOVER.



CHAPTER 9: A REUNION WITH THE PAST

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ADAPT. TION BY: ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
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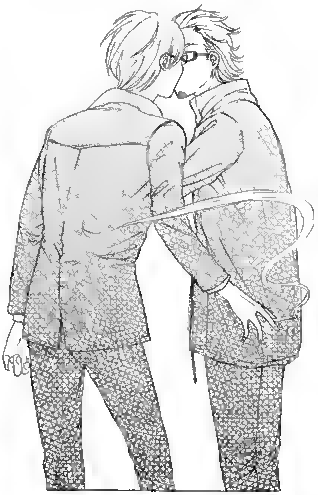
THANKS.
TAKE YOUR TIME
HIDE,
I'M GOING HOME NOW.
'KAY
AH, SORRY.. I'LL BE HOME SOON.
DON'T WORRY!
HM?
WAITING FOR A FRIEND.
HAYATO WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
.I SEE.
HM
ALL RIGHT
LET'S HAVE A SMOKE
HEY.

THAT'S HIM, ISN'T IT?
THE STRAIGHT GUY YOU CAN'T FORGET ABOUT.
HE'S CALLING YOU "HIDE"?
YOU GUYS SURE GET ALONG!
NO WAY.

IT'S NOT THAT EASY!
...TSK
YOU TWO HAVEN'T DONE IT YET?
HMM.
3. PHEW
HARU-KUN IS.
WHAT?
TH... THAT'S NOT WHAT I...
SO I WAS EASY.

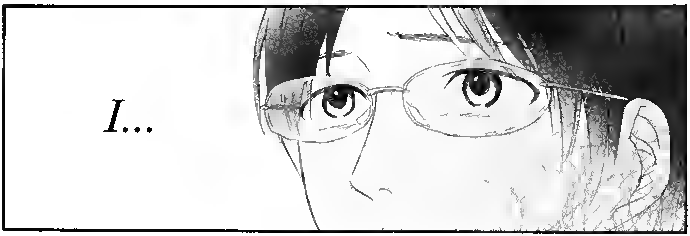


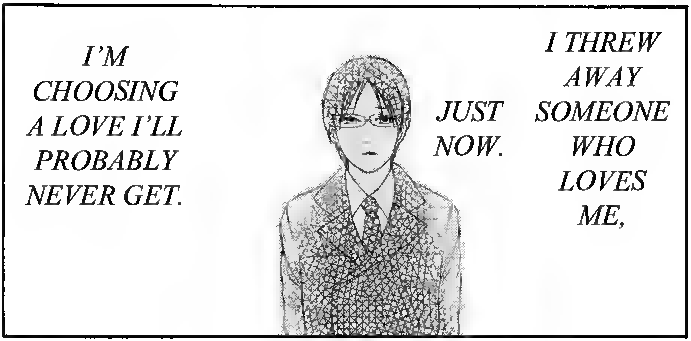
SNICKER
THAT'S JUST FRIENDSHIP! *FRIENDSHIP!*
HAYATO!

YOU'RE LOOKING GOOD. I'M GLAD.
YOU ALWAYS BOTTLE IT UP ALL ALONE
PAT
COME TO ME IF YOU EVER NEED ANY-THING

HAYATO!
SEE YOU.
I GOTTA GET GOING.
...
...
I REALLY.
LOVED YOU

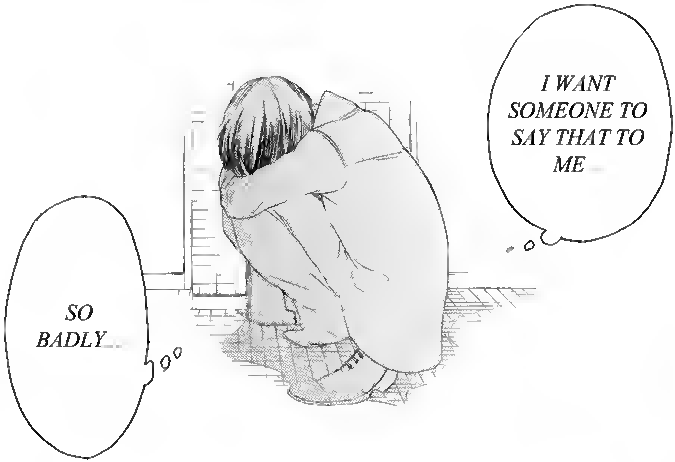
I KNOW.


I...


I'M CHOOSING A LOVE I'LL PROBABLY NEVER GET.
JUST NOW.
I THREW AWAY SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME,

THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG CHOICE HERE...

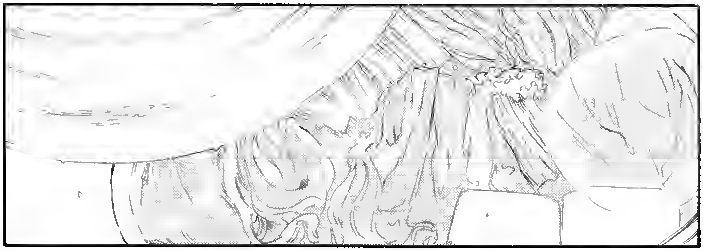
AND I THINK THAT'S FOR THE BEST.

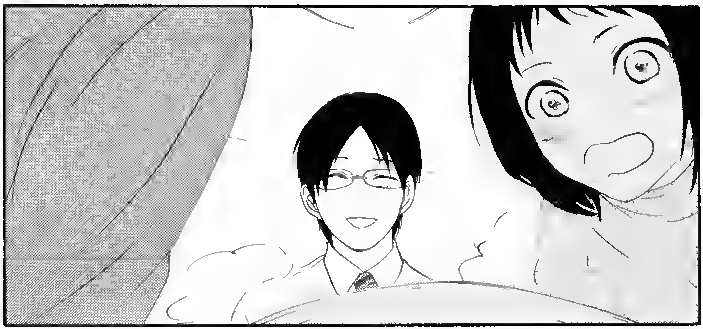


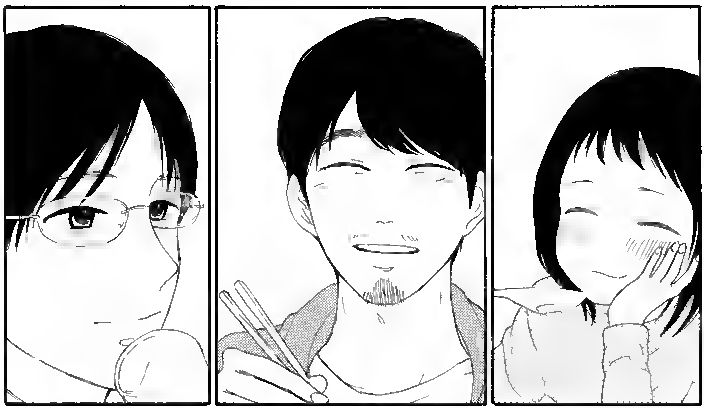
THAT'S HOW I FELT WHILE I WENT TO HARU-KUN'S PLACE.

SHAKING AND SWAYING, HIS FEET FALTER. WHY DOES HE FEEL AS IF WAVES OF UNEASE ARE SURGING OVER HIM...

CHAPTER 10: FEELINGS UNSPOKEN







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THIS WEEK'S HITS!
HE TESTIFIED THAT...
AHAHAHAHA!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
...
YES?
BADUMP
HIDE.
HOW DID HARU-KUN USE TO ACT?

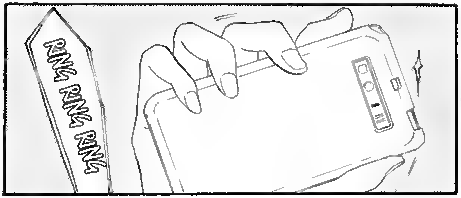
I'VE GOT A...
BAD FEELING.
I WAS THINK-ING,
I HAVEN'T SHOWN YOU YET.

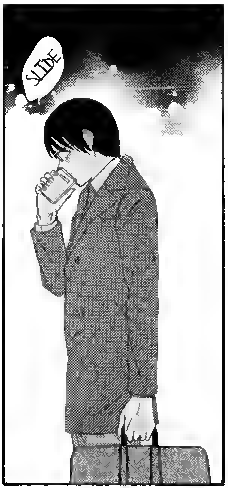
AND THAT FEELING WAS RIGHT.
...

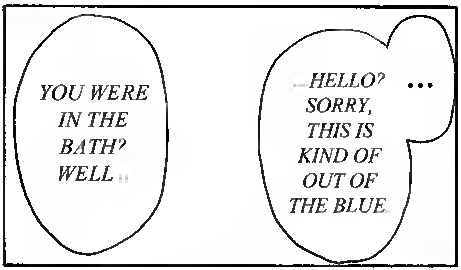
SHE'S REALLY PRETTY.
YOUR WIFE.
YEAH...

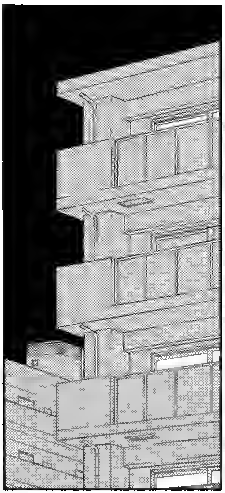
...GOING HOME SOON?
HE SHOWED IT TO ME JUST NOW.
AND THERE'S A REASON WHY...
HE TREASURED THAT PHOTO IN HIS WALLET.
YEAH, GOOD NIGHT
THANKS. 'NIGHT
TAKE CARE.
THUMP

BRING BRING
BRING BRING


RING RING RING


SLIDE


HELLO? SORRY, THIS IS KIND OF OUT OF THE BLUE...
YOU WERE IN THE BATH? WELL..

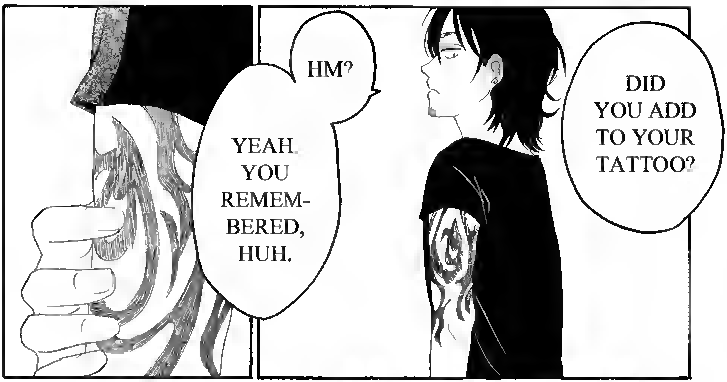


HUH? SORRY, I CAN'T HEAR YOU VERY WELL
HA HA

DID HE COME HERE BECAUSE HE WAS REFUSED SO KINDLY? OR IS IT BECAUSE OF HIS OWN WEAKNESS?

CHAPTER 11: A WARM PLACE

TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEX INDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.



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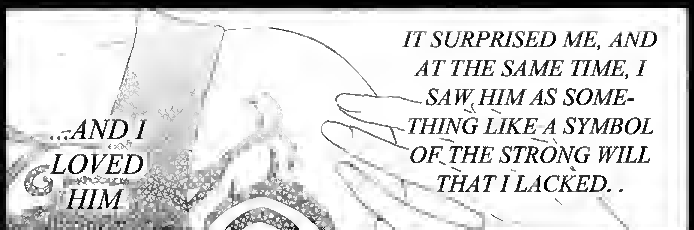
I MUST BE SOME KINDA MASO-CHIST
THIS WAY, I HAVE TO BE A MUSI CIAN
YOU CAN'T GET A REGULAR JOB IF YOU'VE GOT A TATTOO, RIGHT*?
IT'S TO FORCE MY-SELF.



*BECAUSE OF THE ASSOCIATION WITH ORGANIZED CRIME(YAKUZA), MANY WORKPLACES IN JAPAN WILL FIRE YOU IF THEY FIND OUT YOU HAVE A TATTOO, EVEN IF IT'S CONCEALED. TATTOOS ARE UNCOMMON AMONG REGULAR PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THE STIGMA

...MAKES MY EYES WELL UP WITH TEARS.

JUST REMEMBERING THAT...

I'M...
SOR...
...RY..
SOR..
...RY.
I'M...
SOR..
RY...
I'M...
HORRI-
BLE...
THEN RUNNING OFF TO THE COMFORT OF MY OLD LOVER
FREAKING OUT NOW, AFTER I'VE ALREADY MADE MY CHOICE...
SOR...
RY..

IF HE WOULD JUST COLDLY PUSH ME AWAY...
IF HE WOULD JUST HATE ME...

...IT WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER.

THE TEARS OF THE MAN HE LOVED HAVE TO MAKE HIM FEEL SOMETHING... EVEN IF THOSE TEARS ARE NOT FOR HIM.

CHAPTER 12: FRIDAY NIGHT

TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.

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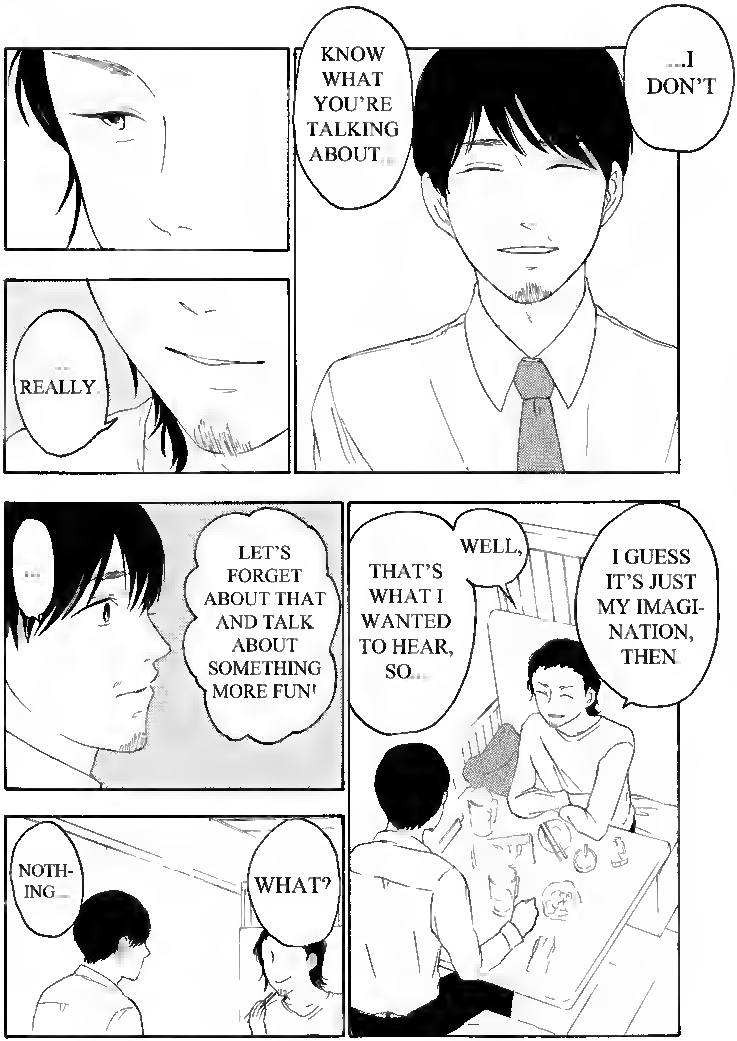
I THOUGHT IF I CAME AGAIN ON THE SAME DAY AT THE SAME TIME, I MIGHT SEE YOU AGAIN.
YEAH.
DIDN'T I SEE YOU LAST WEEK IN FRONT OF THIS CONVENIENCE STORE?
YOU'RE THE ONE I WANTED TO SEE.
NAW.
DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH HIDE?
?
...HUH?
WANT TO CHAT OVER A FEW DRINKS?
ME?

HUH SO HE STAYS OVER TO BABY-SIT YOUR DAUGHTER?
YOU'RE A BAD MAN
WEEKENDS ARE FOR SPENDING WITH YOUR WIFE.
NO...
I'M ALONE
LAST YEAR.. MY WIFE PASSED AWAY
...AH
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOT NO RING
AH
...UM, YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO ASK ABOUT HIDE?
OH, YEAH

HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED?
KITAYAMA-SAN,
TALKING ABOUT?
...WHAT ARE YOU...
...NOT NOTICED ABOUT HIDEAKI?
HAVE YOU SERI-OUSLY...


...I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
...REALLY...
...
LET'S FORGET ABOUT THAT AND TALK ABOUT SOMETHING MORE FUN!
WELL, THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO HEAR, SO...
I GUESS IT'S JUST MY IMAGI-NATION, THEN
NOTH-ING...
WHAT?

DON'T YOU KNOW ANY *NICE* GIRLS?
HEY, NISHI-OKA!
はは HA HA HA HA はは
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?
WHAT? NAGANO-SAN, COME ON...
THERE'S GIRLS RIGHT HERE!
HEY, CHIBA!
はは はは HA HA HA HA

WORST COMES TO WORST, WE'LL JUST THROW YOU IN A TAXI!
YOU'LL BE FINE!
KITA-YAMA-SAN!
WANT ANO-THER?
I... WON'T BE ABLE TO GET MYSELF HOME.
NO..
ASK ME WHAT?
CAN I ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME?
KITA-YAMA-SAN,
NOT NOTICED?
HAVE YOU HON-ESTLY...

KITA-YAMA-SAN.
HE'S YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND, ISN'T HE?
I...
I...
...
...
YEAH
YOU OKAY?

I CAN GO... BY MYSELF...
LET'S GO TO THE WASH-ROOM.
NO, YOU'RE NOT...
ガタ
RATTLE
NO, YOU CAN'T!
PLEASE DON'T FALL ON YOUR FACE!
YOU...
...LOOK AWFUL.
THE STRING THAT HAD BEEN PULLED TIGHT, SNAPS.

CHAPTER 13: HONEST FEELINGS

TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEX INDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.

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HIS WEDDING RING...
WANT-ING TO.
KEEP MY FRIEND...
IS IT SO BAD?
CLOSE IS..
AND MY WIFE...

TO GIVE THAT ANSWER TO A GUY WHO'S CRYING
IT'S AGANST MY PHILOSOPHY

YOU'VE BEEN WORRYING YOURSELF SICK, BUT YOU DON'T SAY A DAMN THING ABOUT IT

*A POPULAR JAPANESE SPORTS DRINK

KITA-YAMA-SAN...
I WASN'T TRYING TO...
TELL YOU TO CHOOSE HIDEAKI.
I JUST...
THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE GOOD FOR YOU TO AT LEAST TELL HIM...
WHAT IT IS YOU FEEL FOR HIM.
...
...
UM...

KURODA-SAN.
THANKS
CHUCKLE
FOR BEING SO CONSIDERATE WITH ME, AND WITH HIDE
I SEE
WELL, I'M GOING HOME
OKAY
TAKE CARE ON THE WAY
SAME TO YOU

WOOOOOO!
LET'S GO TO ANOTHER BAR!
WHAT!
YOU'RE STILL GONNA DRINK!?
GULP
GULP
GULP
GULP
HE..
HELLO?

HIDE?
COULD YOU MEET ME RIGHT NOW?
HIS HONEST FEELINGS HAVE PASSED THROUGH HIS LIPS. HE CAN'T HOLD THEM BACK ANY LONGER.

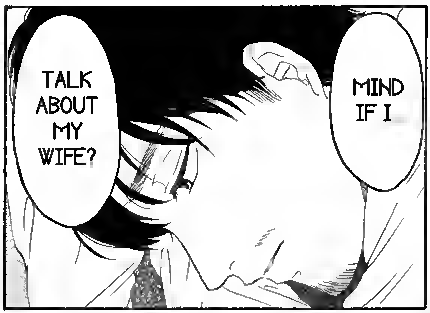
TWITCH
...HIDE!

CHAPTER 14.
WRAPPED IN THE
CURTAIN OF THE NIGHT

IN A HEARTBEAT
BY NERUKO SUGU
TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.

DID YOU MAKE THE LAST TRAIN?
UH-UH
I TOOK A TAXI
I SEE
...
HARU-KUN
ARE YOU UNDER THE WEATHER?
I...
THREW UP A LITTLE
AH
HM
I WONDER IF THERE'S ANYWHERE WE CAN REST FOR A WHILE..
REST

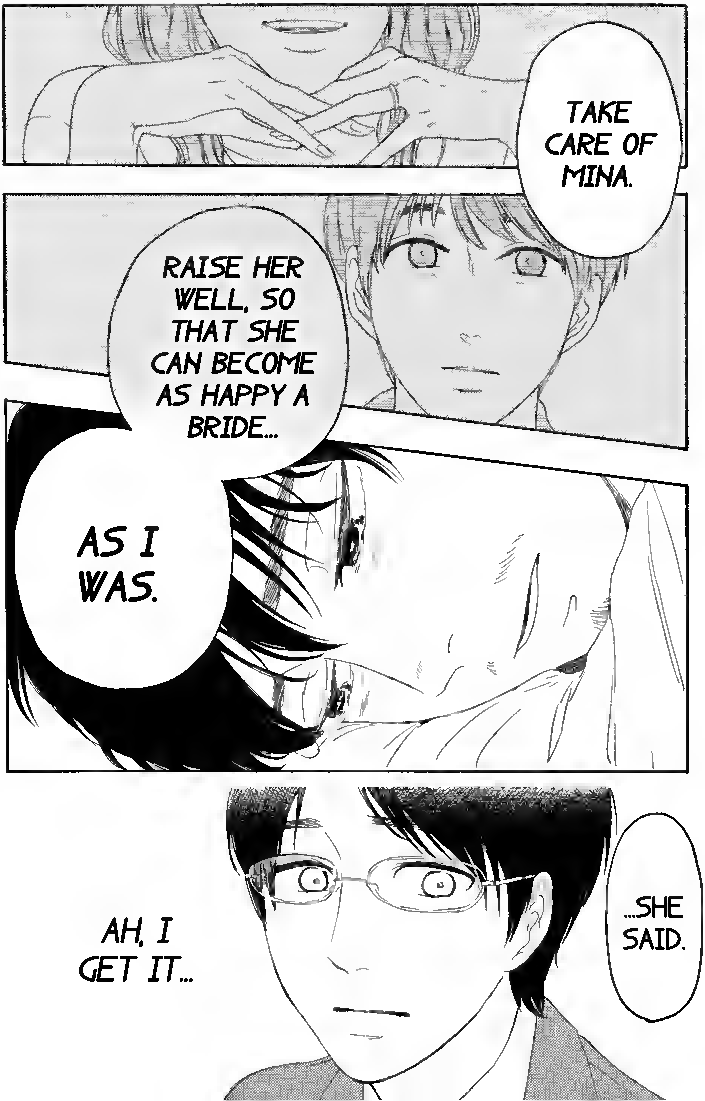
A...
ARE YOU OKAY WITH KARAOKE?
UH?
HM?
I WAS IMAGINING SOMETHING... DIFFERENT
どきっ BAKUN?
どきっ BAKUN?
ふー PHEW
はぁ SIGH
HARU-KUN...
ARE YOU OKAY?
MM...
I'M GONNA... LAY DOWN FOR A BIT.


TALK ABOUT MY WIFE?
MIND IF I

HIDE.
HM?

NO...
...

TOYO-CHAN WAS SOMETIMES SO MYSTE-RIOUS
LIKE SOMETIMES, IF I SAID, "I'D LIKE TO EAT THAT,"
SHE'D SAY, "I THINK IT'S SOLD OUT,"
AND SHE'D BE RIGHT..
I GUESS YOU CALL THAT WOMEN'S INTUITION
IT WASN'T A HUNDRED PERCENT, AND IT WAS REALLY ONLY SOMETIMES..
...
ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE ACCIDENT
HARU-CHAN, IF ANYTHING EVER HAPPENS TO ME.

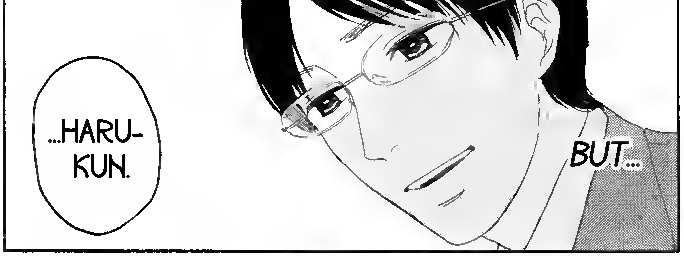

TAKE CARE OF MINA.
RAISE HER WELL, SO THAT SHE CAN BECOME AS HAPPY A BRIDE...
AS I WAS.
...SHE SAID.
AH, I GET IT...

THE REASON HARU-KUN NEVER REALLY CAME TO RELY ON ME...

HE WAS TRYING TO FULFILL HIS WIFE'S WISHES ALONE.

HARU-KUN HAS BEEN CARRYING HIS WIFE'S WILL...

BY HIMSELF, THIS WHOLE TIME.


...HARU-KUN.
BUT...

THAT'S NOT WHAT....

YOU CAME TO TALK ABOUT, IS IT?
HE'S ALWAYS FELT THIS WAY, SO HE REALIZES.. THIS WILL PROBABLY BE A PAINFUL DISCUSSION.

WHEN HARU-KUN SAID HE WANTED TO MEET, I JUST... KNEW...

...WHAT THE WORDS HE'S TRYING TO STRING TOGETHER WOULD BE.

TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
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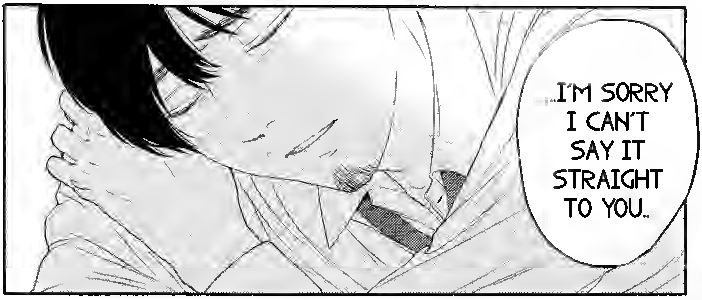
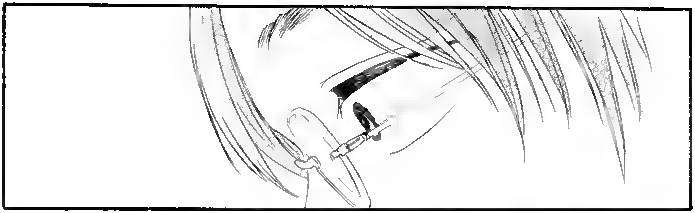
OKAY...
I SUPPOSE MY FIRST LOVE...
HONEST-LY...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD DO...

...WILL FINALLY COME TO AN END.



...
I SEE



"STILL"?

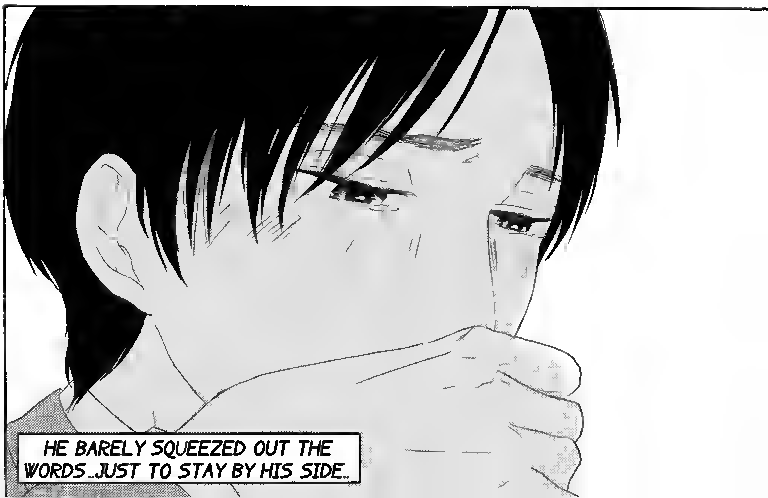
HARU-KUN.
DOES THAT MEAN...
NO...
I'M READING INTO IT...
...TOO MUCH.
HARU-KUN...

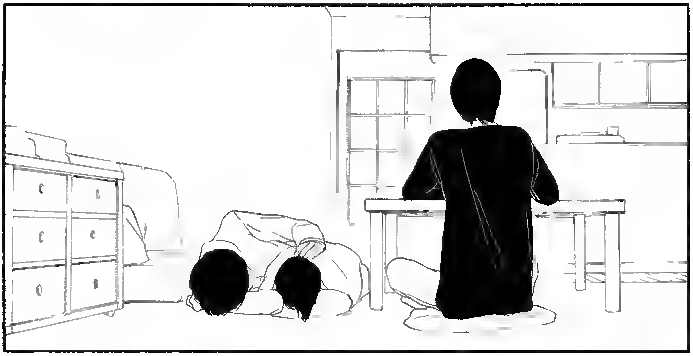
HE'S STRAIGHT...
EVEN IN THE FUTURE..
HE'D NEVER COME TO CARE FOR ME..
WHEN HE TREASURES HIS WIFE SO MUCH.
HE JUST..
KINDLY TURNED ME DOWN.
LET ME BE YOUR FRIEND.
THEN..
...HARU-KUN..

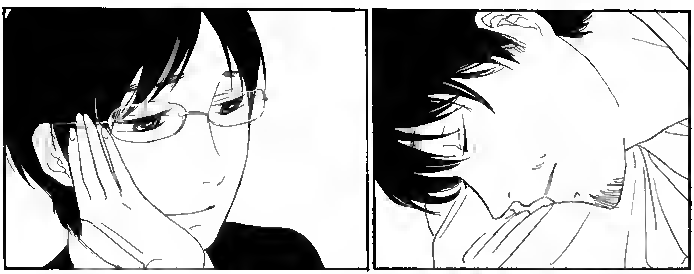
I WON'T ASK...
ANY MORE...
THAN THA...
HI...

FROM NOW ON, WE'LL BE

FROM NOW ON, WE'LL STILL BE FRIENDS...







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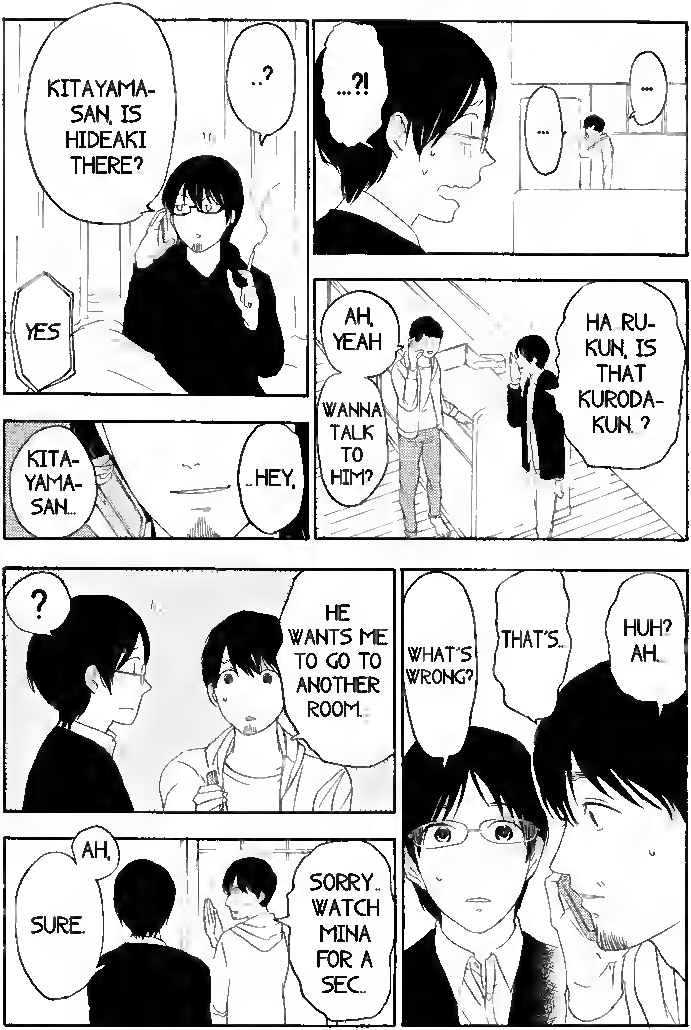
いな、
FLINCH

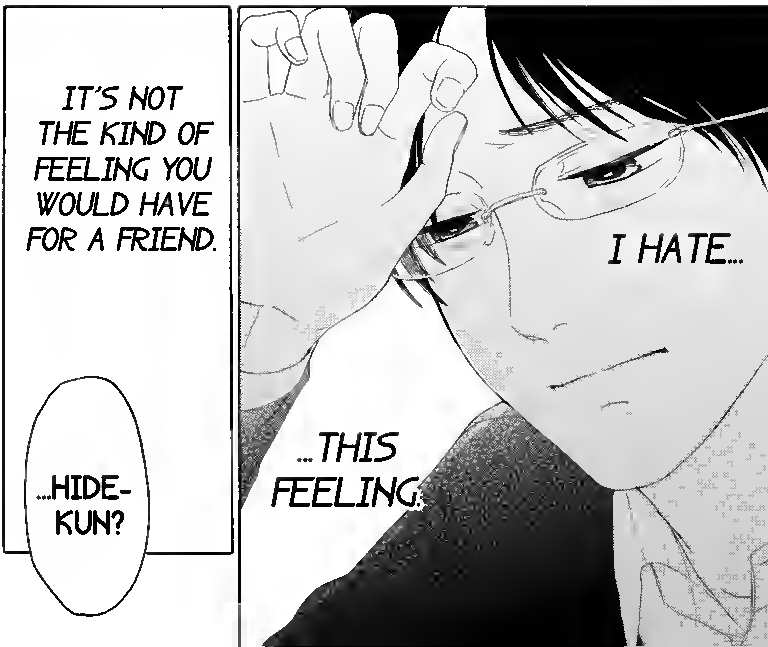
OKAY.
I'LL GET YOU SOME COFFEE, THEN
SIGH
I SEE. YOU SURPRISED ME.
OH
SORRY.. YOU HAD SOME LINT ON YOU.
HARU-KUN IS A FRIEND..
HARU-KUN IS A FRIEND..
A FRIEND...
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THOSE, AGAIN..?

HELLO?
THIS IS KITAYA HUH?
REMEMBER ME,
KITA-YAMA-SAN?
KURO-DA-SAN.?
HUH?


KITAYAMA-SAN, IS HIDEAKI THERE?
..?
YES
...?!
...
...
HA RU-KUN, IS THAT KURODA-KUN. ?
AH, YEAH
WANNA TALK TO HIM?
KITA-YAMA-SAN..
..HEY.
?
HE WANTS ME TO GO TO ANOTHER ROOM..
WHAT'S WRONG?
THAT'S..
HUH? AH..
AH,
SURE.
SORRY.. WATCH MINA FOR A SEC..

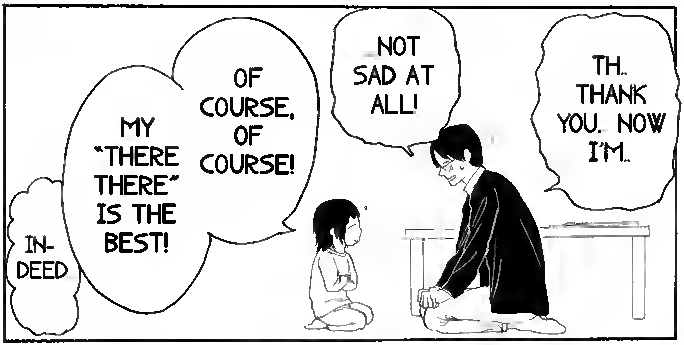
ANOTHER ROOM?
SO THEY'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT SOME-THING HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO HEAR?
WHAT THE HELL, HAYATO! JERK..
AND WHY ARE HAYATO AND HARU-KUN...
カチカチカチ CLICK CLICK CLICK
WERE HAYATO AND HARU-KUN SEEING EACH OTHER IN SECRET?
...
HAYATO... HE KNOWS HOW I FEEL!
IF THEY WERE SEEING EACH OTHER, WHY DID THEY KEEP IT QUIET?
WHY DIDN'T THEY TELL ME...
AH... I HATE THIS.

HARU-KUN IS MY FRIEND, AND HAYATO IS MY EX...
A FRIEND OF MINE MET ANOTHER FRIEND OF MINE... THAT'S ALL IT IS.


IT'S NOT THE KIND OF FEELING YOU WOULD HAVE FOR A FRIEND.
...HIDE-KUN?
I HATE...
...THIS FEELING.

DID I WAKE YOU?
S-SORRY!
WHAT'S WRONG?
!!
HIM?
HIDE-KUN!
THERE, THERE

A LITTLE GIRL JUST TRIED TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER!
...!!
NOW YOU WON'T BE SAD ANYMORE.
I SAID BYE-BYE TO YOUR SADNESS!


IN-DEED
MY "THERE THERE" IS THE BEST!
OF COURSE, OF COURSE!
NOT SAD AT ALL!
TH. THANK YOU. NOW I'M.

I SHOULD JUST ASK HAYATO ABOUT WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON
YEAH. IF IT'S MAKING ME THIS ANXIOUS,
IT'S JUST SO THEY CAN STAY FRIENDS... THAT'S THE ONLY REASON.

TRANSLATION BY JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.

WAS IT SOMETHING YOU HAD TO MAKE HARU-KUN LEAVE HIS SEAT FOR..
BECAUSE IT WOULD BE BAD IF I HEARD ABOUT IT?
NOT REALLY! ...SO YOU TOLD KITAYAMA-SAN YOU WANT TO BE FRIENDS!
OH, MY!
HARU-KUN...
TOLD YOU THAT?
NO WAY...
THAT MAN NEVER TALKS
I JUST THOUGHT THAT WAS PROBABLY THE CASE.
I HIT BINGO, DIDN'T I?
...
ふはは HAHAHA
I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU!

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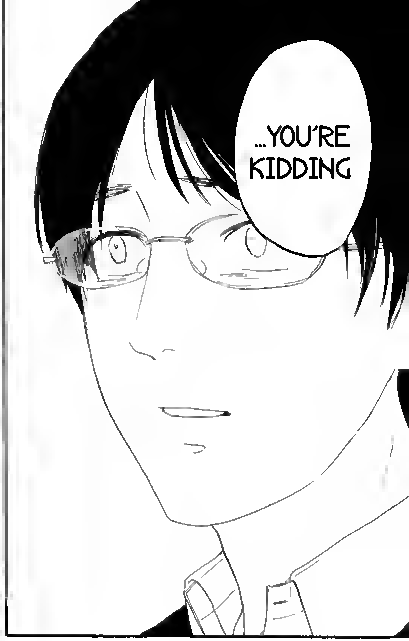
DI..DID YOU CALL HIM..
TO ASK THAT?
YEAH
WHY.
JUST CHECK-ING.
I DON'T LIKE TAKING THINGS THAT BELONG TO OTHERS
?
I LIKE KITAYAMA-SAN.

I AM KIDDING


...YOU'RE KIDDING

HAHA!
はは
YOU'RE ALWAYS TEASING!
SORRY, SORRY
BUT, REAL-LY

HOLD IT! I'VE GOT A CIGA-RETTE!
IT'S LIGHTED!
うはは
AHAHA!

YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON HIM AT ALL, HAVE YOU?
ふは
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO THAT RIGHT AWAY
BUT
I'LL FORGET IT BIT BY BIT.
AND GO BACK TO BEING FRIENDS
HEY,
HIDEAKI

WANNA GET BACK TOGETHER?
YOU'RE JOKING AGAIN
I'M SERIOUS.

WHY? YOU'RE GIVING UP ON HIM, AREN'T YOU?
...
YOU REALLY...

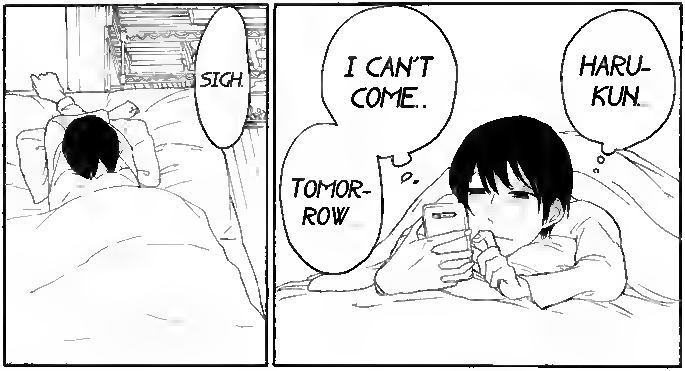
YOU COME TO A HALT JUST A STEP BEFORE THE TRUTH.
...YOU AND KITAYAMA-SAN BOTH.
I'M NOT
ARE YOU TEASING ME AGA..
I DUNNO
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HARU-KUN, TOO...?

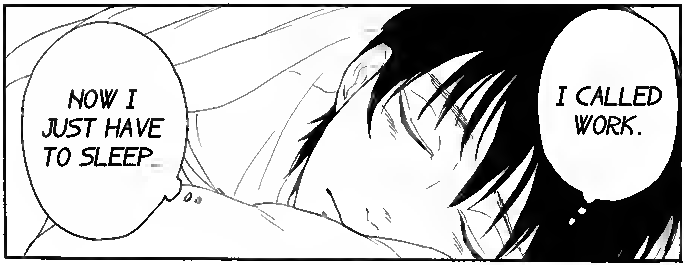
I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM STRAIGHT...
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.
BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO TELL HIM...
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.
I'M SORRY...
DON'T APOLOGIZE. IT'LL BE LIKE I'M BLAMING YOU.
FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, IT'S A BIT COMPLICATED

HAYATO SAYS HARU-KUN COMES TO A HALT JUST A STEP BEFORE THE TRUTH...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE MEANS.
I DON'T GET IT, BUT...
HARU-KUN SAID...
"STILL"... AND THAT WORD KEEPS SPINNING AROUND MY HEAD...
IT'S FILLED MY STOMACH WITH UNCON-TROLLABLE BUTTERFLIES.
HIS FEELINGS WON'T DISAPPEAR... THEY'RE JUST LOST IN A DARK TUNNEL...

AH...
I CAN'T GO TO WORK LIKE THIS...
AH
OH, YEAH
SNIFF
TAKING A LONG WEEKEND OFF WILL LOOK BAD...
WHY'D I HAVE TO GET SICK ON FRIDAY, OF ALL DAYS?

TRANSLATION ⓒ JENNIFER J. WARD
ADAPTATION ⓒ ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.





WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME I CAUGHT A COLD...?

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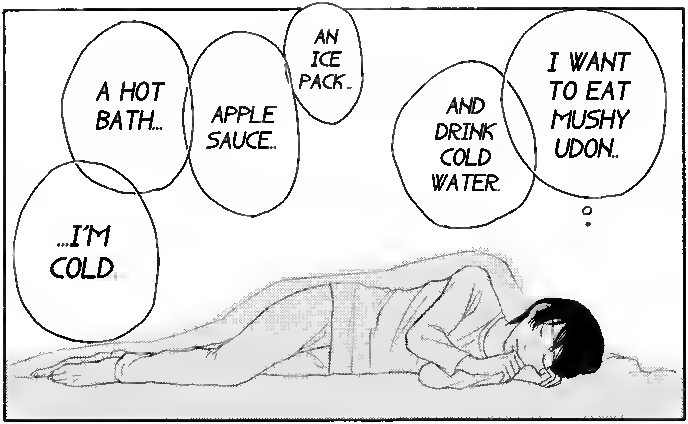
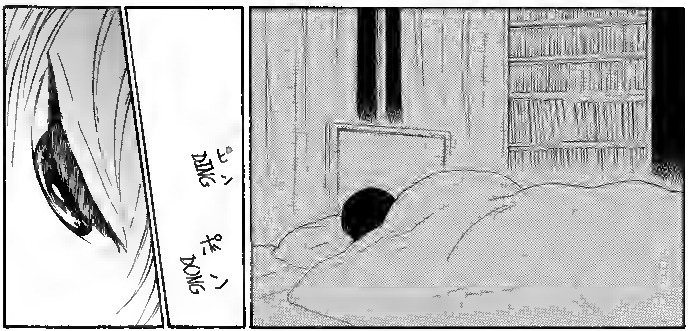

A HOT BATH...
APPLE SAUCE..
AN ICE PACK..
I WANT TO EAT MUSHY UDON..
AND DRINK COLD WATER.
...I'M COLD.

...I'M COLD.


ピン
ポン
DONG

ARE YOU OKAY?
...
YOU DON'T LOOK GOOD..
KUSTLE
AH..
OKAY
CAN I COME IN?
AH
YOU DIDN'T ANSWER THE PHONE OR REPLY TO MY TEXTS

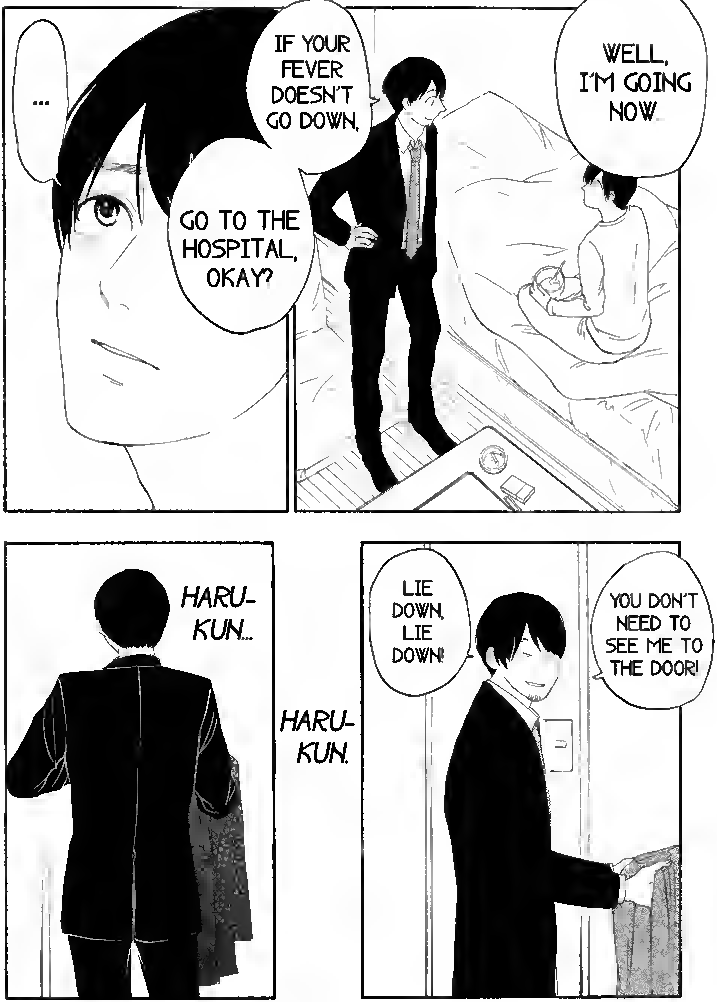
I'M SORRY, BUT MINA IS STILL AT DAY CARE.
SO I HAVE TO LEAVE RIGHT AWAY.
THANK..
YOU.
I'LL WARM YOU UP SOME CONGEE,
SO EAT A LITTLE BIT, OKAY?
HEY, INVALID!
BACK TO BED!
...IS THIS A DREAM?
ガチャ KACHACK
バタン THUMP

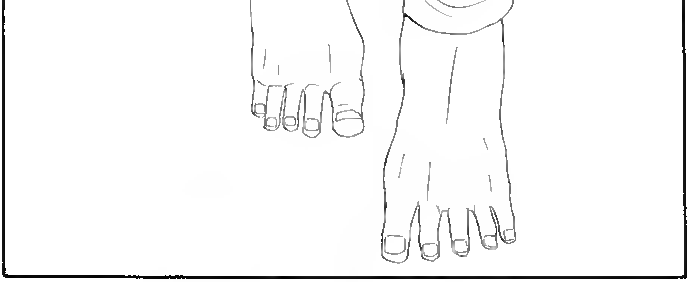
...
THE FEVER'S STILL... 38.1
HMM
IF IT DOESN'T GO DOWN, IT MIGHT BE THE FLU
HMM?
HARU-KUN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I FORGOT TO BUY A SUR-GICAL MASK'...
...SO THIS IS LIKE AN EMER-GENCY MEA-SURE?
...DOES THAT EVEN WORK?
IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING, ISN'T IT?

100.5 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

'IT'S COMMON IN JAPAN TO WEAR A SURGICAL MASK AROUND SICK PEOPLE OR TO WEAR ONE IF YOU ARE SICK. PEOPLE OFTEN WEAR THEM ON THE TRAIN OR AT WORK SINCE MOST PEOPLE RARELY TAKE SICK LEAVE.

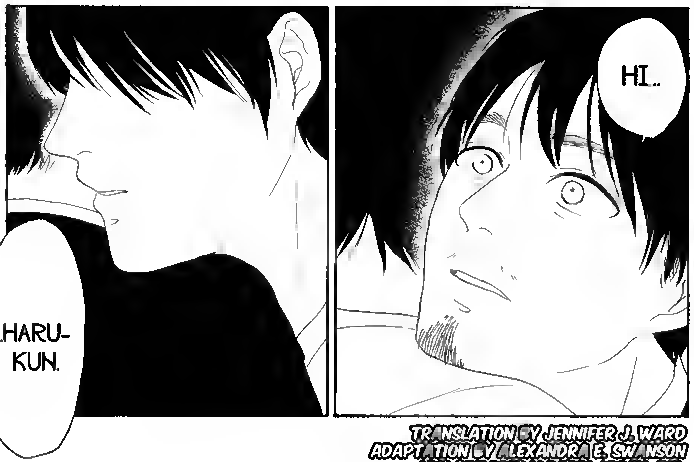
HOW IS IT? FEEL LIKE YOU CAN EAT IT ALL?
YEAH.
SHUT UP!
YOU'RE A LITTLE DAFT SOMETIMES, HARU-KUN.
REALLY?
SO YOU HAVE AN APPETITE THAT'S GOOD.


...
IF YOUR FEVER DOESN'T GO DOWN,
GO TO THE HOSPITAL, OKAY?
WELL, I'M GOING NOW.
HARU-KUN...
HARU-KUN.
LIE DOWN, LIE DOWN!
YOU DON'T NEED TO SEE ME TO THE DOOR!



...DON'T GO.

HIS HEART IS CONTROLLING HIS WEAKENED BODY.



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ADAPTATION ✓ ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
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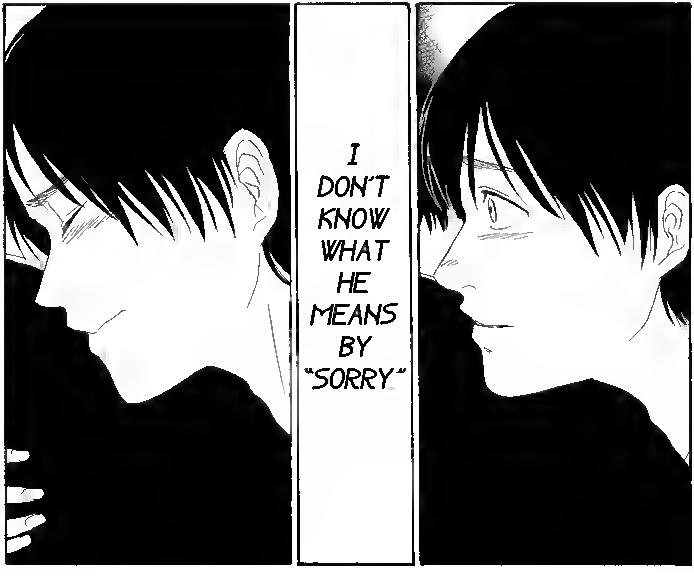
SO...
DON'T BE SO KIND TO ME...
BE EVEN MORE KIND TO ME...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME...
WORRY EVEN MORE ABOUT ME...
I DON'T WANT TO LIKE YOU...
MORE THAN I ALREADY DO.
HARU-KUN...

ぽん
SORRY.
...

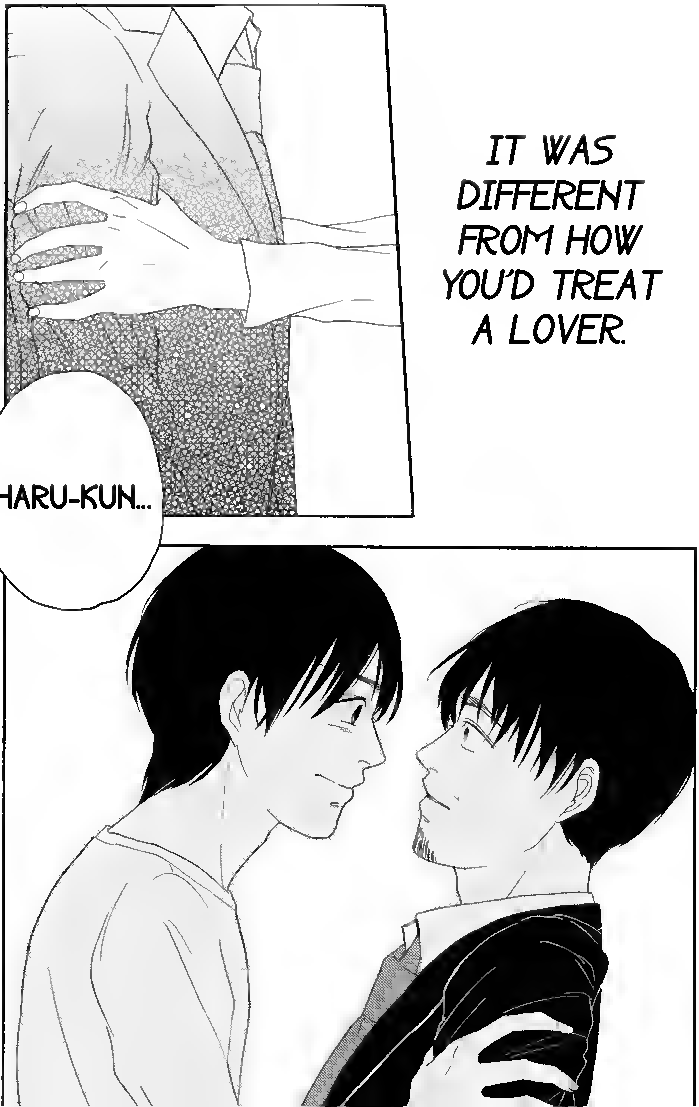


...BUT HE'S WARM.
SO WARM.

BUT WHEN HARU-KUN PATTED MY BACK,

IT FELT LIKE A PARENT CONSOLING A CHILD.

IT WAS THAT SORT OF KIND-NESS.


IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM HOW YOU'D TREAT A LOVER.
HARU-KUN...

I WAS A FOOL, SWEPT
AWAY BY THE FEVER...

AND I WANTED MORE.

HIS KINDNESS LEFT ME IN A STUPOR

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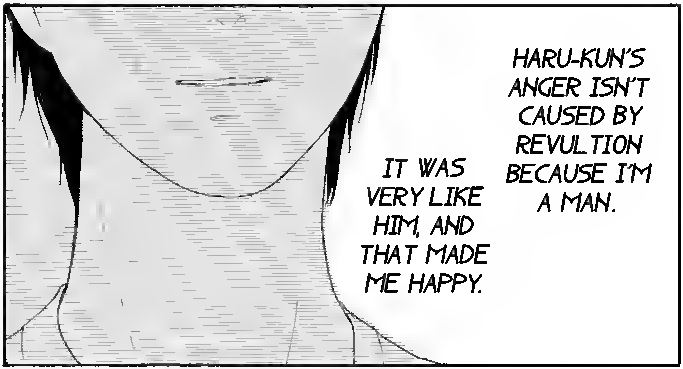
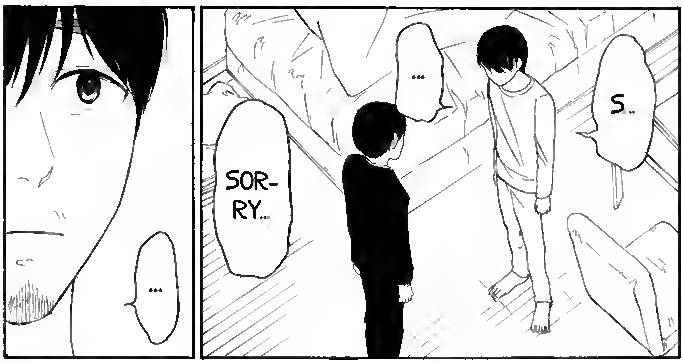
I APOLO-
GIZE,
BUT...
I'M
SORRY FOR
HITTING
YOU

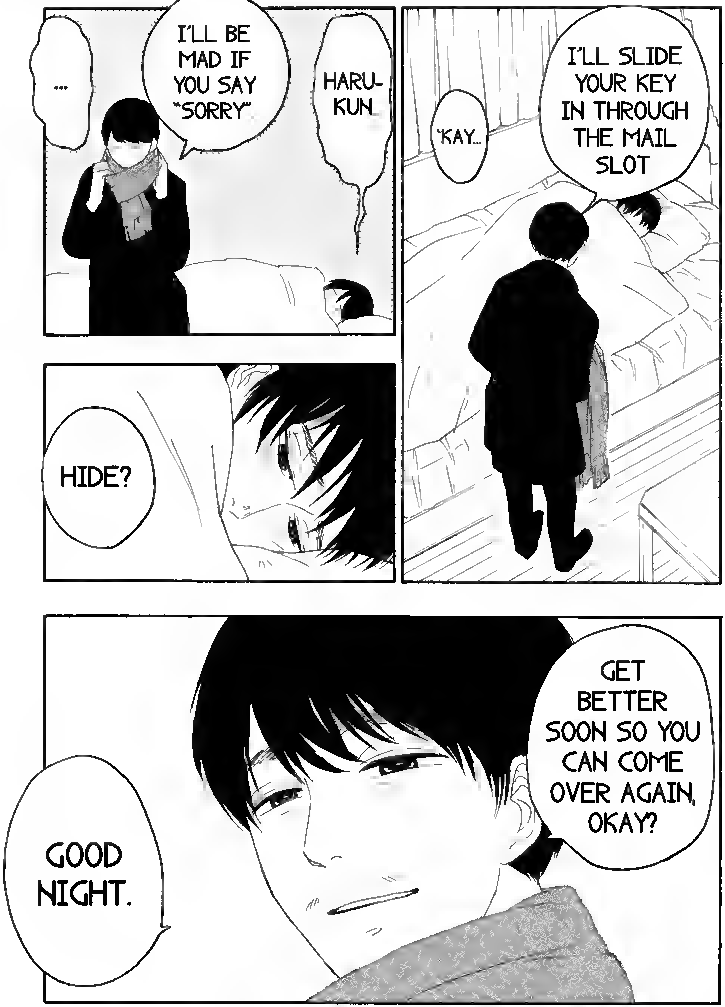
YOU'RE
NOT MY
LOVER...
SO I
DON'T
WANT TO
DO THIS
WITH YOU.


HARU-KUN'S ANGER ISN'T CAUSED BY REVULTION BECAUSE I'M A MAN.
IT WAS VERY LIKE HIM, AND THAT MADE ME HAPPY.

BUT..
THE HAPPIER I FEEL ABOUT THAT,
THE BIGGER MY DISGRACE FEELS.


...
S..
...
SOR-RY..

I'M NOT...
MAD AT YOU, OKAY...
SOR-RY...
I SAID I'M NOT MAD
SOR-RY...
わしゃ RUFFLE
わしゃ RUFFLE
THAT'S ENOUGH SORRIES, SO GO BACK TO BED BEFORE YOUR FEVER GETS WORSE, OKAY?


...
I'LL BE MAD IF YOU SAY "SORRY"
HARU-KUN
'KAY...
I'LL SLIDE YOUR KEY IN THROUGH THE MAIL SLOT
HIDE?
GOOD NIGHT.
GET BETTER SOON SO YOU CAN COME OVER AGAIN, OKAY?

YOU'RE TOO NICE, HARU-KUN...

DON'T CATCH A CHILL...

...I THOUGHT AS I DOZED IN A BED THAT WAS NO LONGER COLD.

TO MY BELOVED.. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL COME, BUT YOU HAVE ALL MY PRAYERS

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SHE WAS PROBABLY DOING IT FOR ME...
SHE WAS REALLY OBEDIENT.
..SO MUCH SO IT MADE ME UNEASY.
BUT THEN YOU STARTED HELPING OUT,
AND MINA STARTED GETTING SELFISH.. OR, WELL.
SHE STARTED COMMUNI-CATING WHAT SHE WANTS.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.

THAT'S WHAT I JUST SAID!
I'M BEING USEFUL, HUH
YEAH

IT'S NOT THAT...
THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH YOU..
IT'S JUST THAT MY HEAD'S STILL FULL OF MY WIFE
I WANTED TO TELL YOU BEFORE WHAT I FELT,
BUT THERE'S STILL MORE TO SAY

EVEN AFTER A YEAR, I STILL SEE HER IN MY DREAMS
EVEN NOW, I FEEL LIKE...
SHE MIGHT OPEN THE FRONT DOOR AND WALK IN SAYING, "I'M HOME."
FOR MINA'S SAKE... AND FOR MY OWN...
I KNOW EVENTUALLY... I HAVE TO...

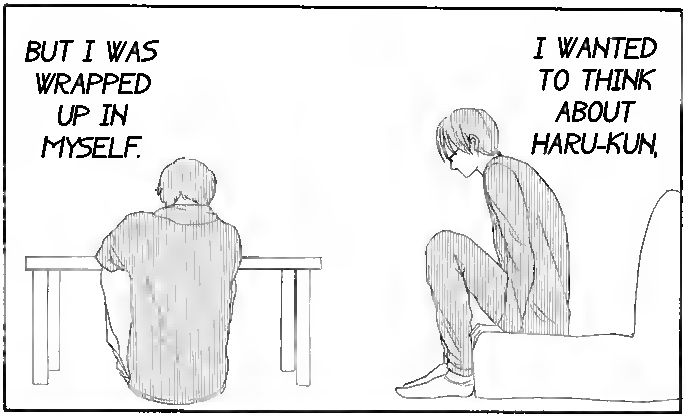
CLOSURE AND FORGETTING ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.
I DON'T THINK TOYO-CHAN WOULD BE MAD..
IF I FELL IN LOVE AGAIN.
BUT THAT STILL FEELS LIKE A BETRAYAL.
IF I STILL FEEL LIKE THAT, THEN I'M...
NOT READY YET.
I DON'T WANT TO FALL IN LOVE.
IN A WAY THAT'S INSULTING.
TO TOYO-CHAN OR TO MY NEW LOVER.

I GUESS THINKING LIKE THIS...
IS RATHER SENTIMENTAL OF ME.
I...
I'M SUCH A FOOL...

HIS WIFE HAS JUST PASSED, AND HE WAS CONSIDERATE OF ALL OF US...

HARU-KUN WAS THINKING OF HIS WIFE, OF MINA, AND ME.

BUT I...



I COULD ONLY THINK ABOUT MYSELF.

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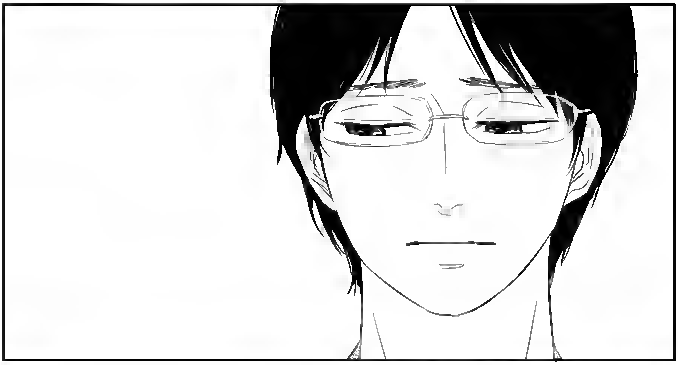
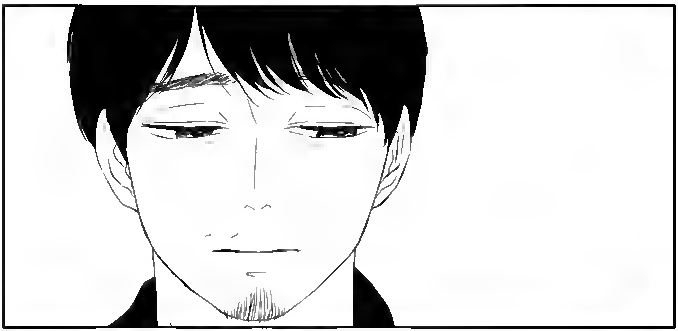
THOUGH I WANTED TO THINK ABOUT HARU-KUN,



I WAS WRAPPED UP IN MYSELF.



BUT...

...WHEN?
NOT YET.
WHEN HARU-KUN... FINISHES SORTING OUT HIS FEELINGS
AND FEELS LIKE HE CAN FALL IN LOVE AGAIN...
WHEN THAT TIME COMES, WILL HE STILL NEED ME?
SHE'LL GROW UP...
MINA-CHAN STICKS TO ME NOW, BUT EVENTUALLY...
WHAT ARE THE ODDS THAT I'LL BE AN OPTION FOR HIM?

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HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO...
FEEL LIKE THIS...
HOW LONG SHOULD I WAIT?
HOW LONG?
...
HARU-KUN...

WILL YOU EVEN CONSIDER ME IN THE FUTURE, HARU-KUN?
IF I WAIT AND WAIT..
FOR YOU, HARU-KUN..
...AH..
AND THEN?
NO...
WHAT IF..

IF A NICE WOMAN SHOWS UP...
WOULDN'T YOU CHOOSE HER INSTEAD?!
THIS ISN'T WHAT I MEAN TO...
"NOT YET, NOT YET"...
IT'S NOT FAIR FOR YOU TO SAY THAT!

...
IT'S NOT FAIR...
HARU-KUN..
IT'S NOT FAIR...

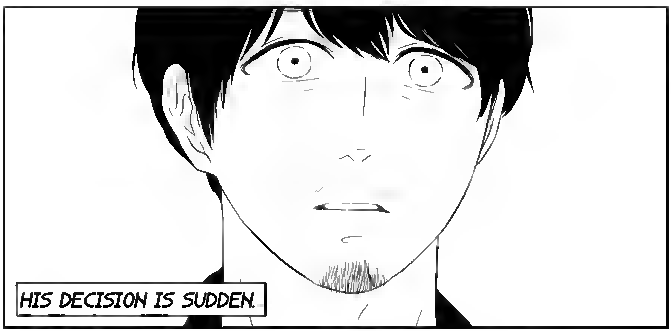
I THOUGHT I'D BEEN HONEST WITH HIM ABOUT MY FEELINGS.

BUT THAT DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER.

...
AND I REALIZED THAT I'D BEEN WRAPPED UP IN MYSELF AGAIN.
I COOLED MY HEAD...
EVEN THOUGH HARU-KUN WAS SO HONEST WITH ME...
GET SO EMOTIONAL...
DID I...
W-WHY...
ふるふる
YOU IDIOT!

OH!
MORNING
MORN-
ING.
SORRY FOR YES-
TERDAY
I JUST
KINDA..
SNAPPED.
IT'S
OKAY
IT
DOESN'T
BOTHER
ME

I'M NOT
GOING TO
COME OVER
FOR A LITTLE
WHILE.



CHAPTER 23: A GOOD GUY

...HIDE SAID, AND LEFT.

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ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA C. SWANSON
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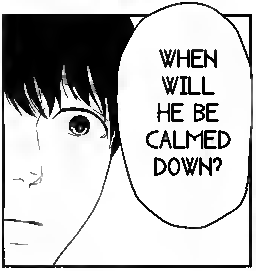

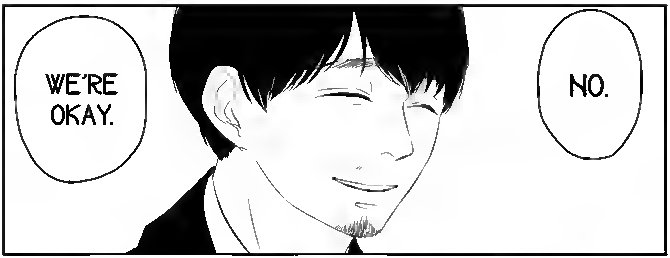

WHAT IS "OKAY"?

"WE'RE OKAY"... IT'S LIKE I WAS SAYING THAT TO MYSELF.

IT WASN'T A FIGHT, AND IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE NEVER SEEING EACH OTHER AGAIN.

SO "WE'RE OKAY."

IT'S NOT FAIR FOR YOU TO SAY THAT!
"NOT YET, NOT YET"...
WAS I.. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIM?
NEXT STOP..
...

'SUP.
HUH? KITAYAMA? THIS IS UNUSUAL.
I FINALLY GAVE IN.
HA! YOU CHUMP!
YOU GAVE IN TO STRESS!
STRESS... HUH
RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS! IT WON'T BE FUNNY IF YOU PASS OUT FROM STRESS
YOU'RE BEING DRAMATIC
YOU'RE BOTTLING UP ENOUGH OF IT TO BE SMOKING, AREN'T YOU?
...
YEAH. MAYBE...

IS SHE MARRIED!?
NO..
HAHA
YOU'RE WAY OFF-BASE.
COUGH!!
WHY DON'T YOU MARRY THAT GIRL WHO'S ALWAYS COMING OVER TO YOUR PLACE TO HELP?
YOU SAID YOU WERE OLD FRIENDS, SO..
OH
IT'S A MAN. A MAN..
IF HE CAN GO OVER TO YOUR PLACE TO HELP OUT..
IT MEANS HE'S GOT TIME AND ENERGY TO SPARE, RIGHT?
HMM?
SURE HAVE A LOT OF FREE TIME ON THEIR HANDS
BUT MAN, TWENTY-SOMETHINGS THESE DAYS

HE'S A GOOD GUY
HE'S..
AND HE OBVIOUSLY WOULDN'T GET ANY SEXUAL SATISFAC-TION OUT OF IT
HA HA HAHA
HE REALLY TRIES HARD...
TO BE THERE FOR ME...
WHAT? YOU WANNA HAVE ME MARRY AGAIN THAT BADLY?
TOO BAD HE'S NOT A WOMAN!
SEEMS LIKE A GOOD GUY
HMM.
SO MUCH THAT I CAN'T THANK HIM ENOUGH.

I CAN SAY IT NOW, BUT...
IT HURT TO LOOK AT YOU LAST YEAR
WELL, YOU KNOW...
IT'S A MIRACLE YOU DIDN'T PASS OUT FROM OVERWORK.
YOU WERE LITERALLY WORKING YOURSELF TO THE BONE...
YEAH, THAT DID HAPPEN.
I WAS LIKE, "LET'S GO GET SOME FOOD!"
YEAH.
THIS IS YOUR ARM!?
YOU'RE THIN AS A RAIL, YOU IOIOT!
YOU'RE BARELY EATING ANYTHING, AREN'T YOU?!

AHAHA
へはは
WELL, ANYWAY
IF YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, I GUESS IT'S THANKS TO HIM.
BUT YOU NEED TO FATTEN UP! YOU'RE MAKING ME INSE-CURE.
YOU'RE LOOKING MUCH BETTER NOW.
I'D WORRY ABOUT YOU IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SOMEONE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.
YOU'RE TOO HARDWORKING AND YOU PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD.
I SEE...
WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER, HARU-KUN?
I THOUGHT I STARTED TAKING CARE OF MYSELF FOR MINA'S SAKE, BUT...
LATELY...

I THOUGHT I'D DECIDED I WOULDN'T HAVE ANY MORE REGRETS..

AND THAT I'D GIVE EVERYTHING I HAVE TO ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE.

MAYBE I WAS TAKING SOMEONE FOR GRANTED AGAIN. THAT THOUGHT SENT CHILLS DOWN MY SPINE.

HE COULDN'T NOTICE WHEN IT WAS OBVIOUS. HE FELT FOR THE FIRST TIME ONCE HE LET HIM GO... NOW IRREPLACABLE HIS FRIEND WAS...

MY HEART GREW SUNNY ALONG WITH THE WEATHER

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ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
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NOT YET. IT'S ONLY BEEN HALF A MONTH.

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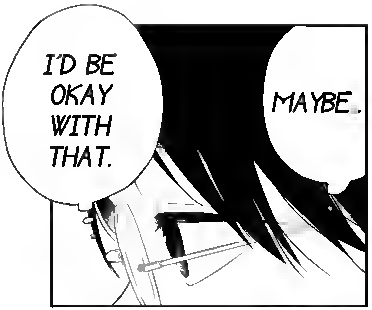


IF I KEEP ON LIKE THIS,

SOMEDAY MY FEELINGS WILL COOL,

AND IT WILL BECOME A "NICE MEMORY"

YES LIKE THE WEATHER, I GO SUNNY AND THEN CLOUDY..

PASSING THROUGH MANY TOMORROWS.

AS TIME FLOWS ALONG, THEY AGE..

PEOPLE MOVE AWAY, JUST LIKE THE SEASONS.

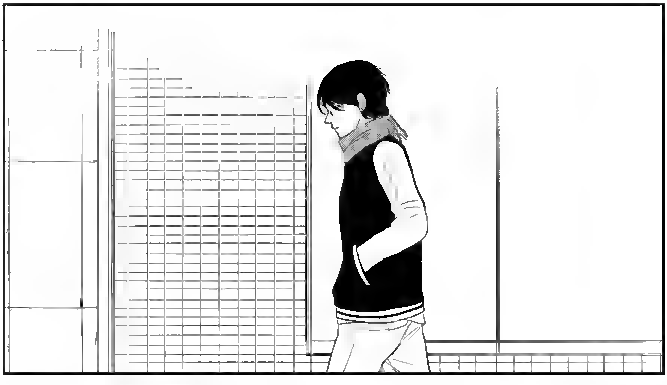
SO I SHOULDN'T INTERFERE WITH THAT. I SHOULD HAVE MY OWN HAPPINESS.

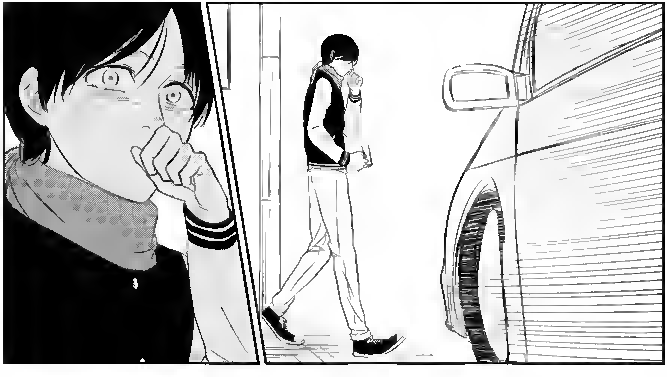
HARU-KUN HAS A FORM OF HAPPI-NESS.

THAT I DON'T.

ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?
I GOT THE CHANCE TO DREAM A LITTLE ABOUT A FUTURE.
MY FIRST LOVE ENDED, THAT DAY.
WHY ARE ALL THE HAPPY SCENES I CAN REMEMBER FROM THE DINNER TABLE?

I ALWAYS FEEL
PRESSURED TO
BE "OKAY."





MMM!
HNN-NGH!
CALL
!
KURO-DA-SAN?
HELLO?
KITA-YAMA-SAN?
?
HELLO?
DID SO-
NO-BODY'S CALLED YOU, RIGHT?
CALM DOWN AND LISTEN

SUDDEN NEWS COMES IN THE FACE OF AN INDELIBLE REALITY, HIS THOUGHTS COME TO A HALT

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HIDE WAS IN AN ACCIDENT?

I'VE...

...HAD ENOUGH OF THAT FEELING.

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ペタ…ペタ…
HUH...?

HARU-KUN?!
..HIDE?
WHAT'S WRONG?
NO WAY... DID MINA-CHAN GET HURT?
I...
HEARD.. YOU HAD AN ACCI-DENT
..? OH.. OH!
!
SO HAYA-TO..
THAT IDIOT

I BASICALLY JUST FELL OVER. I WASN'T LOOKING WHERE I WAS GOING...
THE CAR WAS BARELY MOVING WHEN IT BUMPED ME...
THERE... WAS AN ACCIDENT, BUT...
IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL...
BUT I HIT MY HEAD A LITTLE WHEN I FELL...
SO I... GOT MYSELF CHECKED OUT, AND IT WAS JUST A FEW SCRAPES...
I LEFT MY CELL AT HOME, SO
SO I ASKED HAYATO KURODA-KUN TO BRING IT TO ME
KURODA-KUN MADE IT OUT TO BE A BIG DEAL, DIDN'T HE?
SORRY.. I'LL GIVE HIM A TALK-ING-TO

THANK GOD.

HA..
HARU-KUN?
UH... M..
...
ばっ
JERK
WE-
WE'RE IN PUBLIC
!
SORRY!

...
WHAT'LL YOU DO NOW, HARU-KUN?
UMM... AH... I NEED TO GO PICK UP MINA-CHAN
OKAY... I'LL GO WITH YOU PART-WAY
'KAY...

WHEN'S THE LAST TIME I FELT SO LIGHT?

I'VE MADE MY DECISION.

VISITING HER GRAVE?
I'VE GOT THE DAY OFF, TOO
I CAN TAKE MINA-CHAN FOR THE DAY, IF YOU WANT
IT'S OKAY
I THOUGHT I'D GO DURING THE LONG WEEKEND
YEAH.
HMM? WHAT?
AND I WANTED TO ASK YOU A FAVOR
THEY WANT TO SEE MINA, TOO
I'M HAVING MY WIFE'S PARENTS TAKE CARE OF HER

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ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA C. SWANSON
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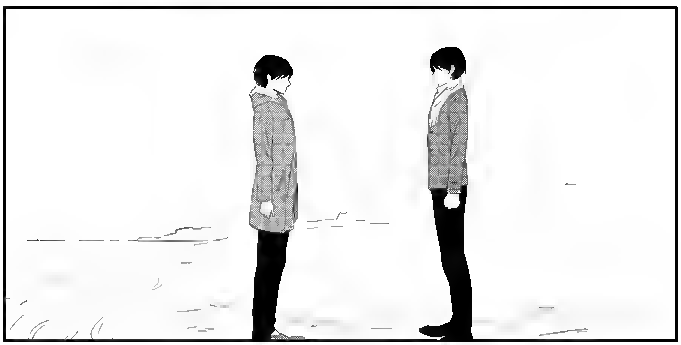
NO, I'M FINE.
YOU'RE NOT CAR-SICK?
HMM?
YOU OKAY?
LET'S TAKE A LITTLE DETOUR.

...
IT'S REALLY BLOWING, HUH
IT'S COLD!
THIS IS WHERE...
I FIRST MET MY WIFE.

WE BROUGHT MINA HERE, BEFORE, TOO.
I PRO-POSED TO HER HERE..
THAT'S WHY..
YEAH
MEMO-RIES, HUH
IT'S A PLACE WITH LOTS OF..

I WANTED TO COME HERE ONCE MORE.
IF I EVER FELT LIKE I COULD BE WITH SOME-ONE AGAIN



I WANT YOU BY MY SIDE.
YOU'RE IMPORTANT TO ME, HIDE.
MAYBE THAT'S NOT A VERY GOOD REPLY...

IT'S ENOUGH.

I'M SORRY...
I KEPT AVOIDING RESPONDING TO YOU.

I DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE YOU A RESPONSE UNLESS I MEANT IT WHOLE-HEARTEDLY.

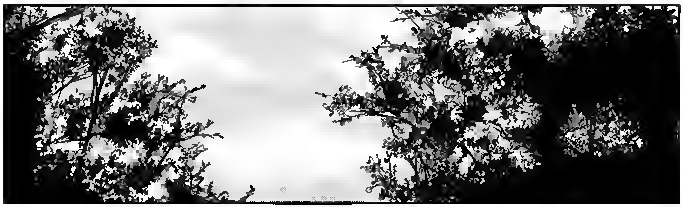
BUT I REALIZED...
HE'S SOMONE IMPORTANT TO ME...
I COULD SAY IT FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF MY HEART...

(AND I REALIZED THAT I TREASURED HIM)

HE FINALLY GOT THROUGH TO HIM HIS FEELINGS WERE ACCEPTED

CHAPTER 27: DETERMINATION

MangaBox



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YOU WERE THE MOST AMAZING WIFE.

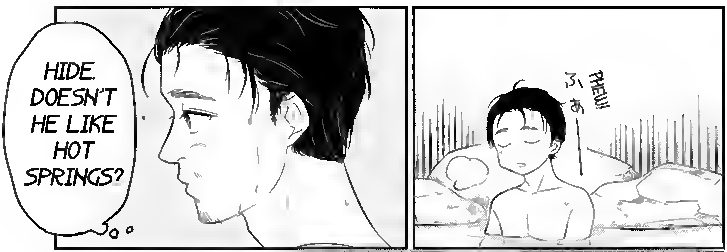
MINA-CHAN, WELL, SHE'S DETERMINED TO STAY OVER
chuckle
TONIGHT?
HUH?
YES, I'LL BE THERE IN ABOUT AN HOUR.
IF IT'S NO TROUBLE...
Y-YOU DON'T HAVE TO MENTION THAT!
AND MY HUSBAND IS ALWAYS HAPPY WHEN MINA-CHAN IS OVER
chuckle
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US JUST GO RELAX!
HUH..
WHY DON'T YOU GO SPEND THE NIGHT SOMEWHERE?
I'M SURE YOU'RE TIRED FROM WORK AND TAKING CARE OF MINA, HARUMI-SAN
SO YOU GO PLAY, TOO, DADDY!
I'M HAVING FUN!
AND, AND, NEXT, THEY'RE BRINGING SISTER PRINCESS! SO I'M STAYING OVER!
GREAT! THEY HAVE A WII! I'M PLAYING WITH GRANDPA!
MINA? ARE YOU...
HELLO! DADDY?

*A SERIES OF (CLEAN) DATING-SIM-STYLE GAMES AND ANIME REVOLVING AROUND A BOY INTERACTING WITH A BUNCH OF HIS CUTE SISTERS.

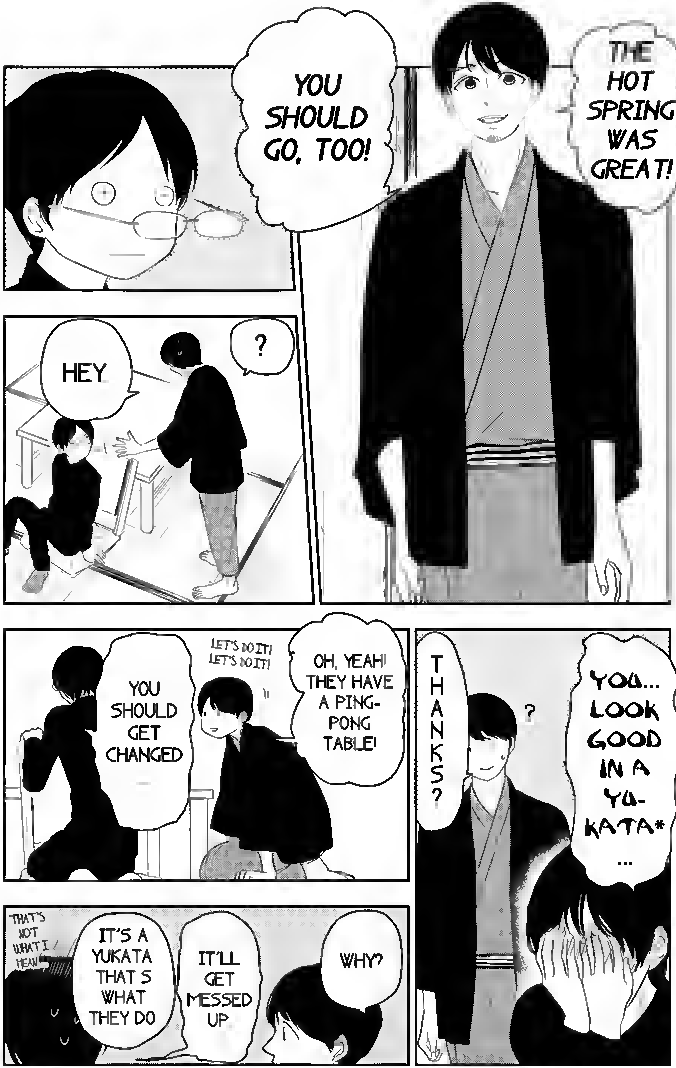
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY?
HUHH!
I SEE... DON'T GO BEGGING FOR THINGS
HM? THANKS.
YES. OKAY, THEN I WILL...
TAKE CARE OF MINA
YOU'RE STAYING OVER?
MINA IS
THEW
3x
THEY SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU SPEND THE NIGHT SOMEWHERE?"
HUH?
WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I CAN SEND YOU-
LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT!
OKAY,
HAHA!
THEN LET'S GO LET OUR HAIR DOWN

IT'S A PRETTY NICE ROOM, EH?
TO THE HOT SPRING!
HMM?
LET'S GO RIGHT AWAY!
I'LL GO IN... AFTER YOU COME OUT...
NO, UM...
YOU WANT TO GO ALONE?
?
WELL, WE DON'T HAVE TO RUSH.
HMM?
I-I'LL GO LATER...

I'D DIE.
IF I WENT INTO THE HOT SPRINGS WITH HARU-KUN
AGH!
だw だw だw…
SEE YOU
THEN SEE YOU!


HIDE. DOESN'T HE LIKE HOT SPRINGS?
ふぁ〜
PHEW!!

WEL-COME BA
I'M BACK!



*LIGHT COTTON ROBES FOR MEN OR WOMEN WORN AFTER BATHING OR IN THE SUMMER. MOST JAPANESE HOTELS AND INNS HAVE YUKATA IN THEIR ROOMS FOR CUSTOMER USE.

*TRADITIONAL-STYLE JAPANESE INN. USUALLY THE STAFF WILL PUT OUT FUTONS ON THE FLOOR FOR YOU WHILE YOU'RE IN THE BATH OR HOT SPRING AND IT WILL BE THERE WHEN YOU COME BACK.
WHACK
MIND IF I...
LAY OUT YOUR FUTON?
AH!
TAKE YOUR TIME
THEN I'M... GOING, TOO.
BETTER GET BACK
I-I-I'M FINE... I'LL BE BACK...
HIDE?! ARE YOU OKAY?!
MAYBE STAYING AT A HOT SPRING RYOKAN WAS A BAD IDEA...
HMM.
WHAT THE HECK? AGH!
HARU-KUN DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE! MY HEART CAN'T TAKE THIS!
AM I OVER-THINKING THINGS?!
ARE STRAIGHT GUYS ALL SO DEFENCE-LESS?!
BADUMP
IT ALL GOES OVER HARU'S HAPPY HEAD, BUT TONIGHT IS THEIR FIRST NIGHT OF TEMPTATION TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS..

CHAPTER 28: THE DEGREE OF UNDERSTANDING

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ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
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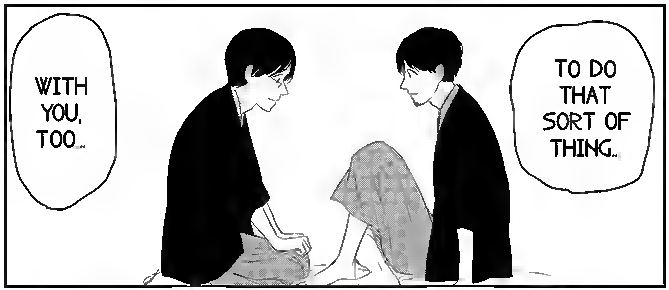

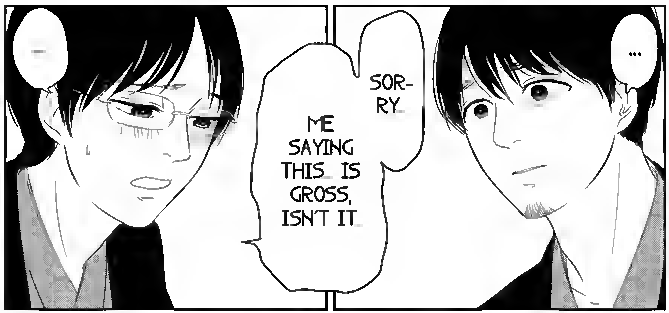

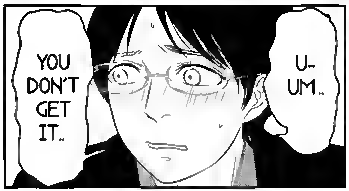

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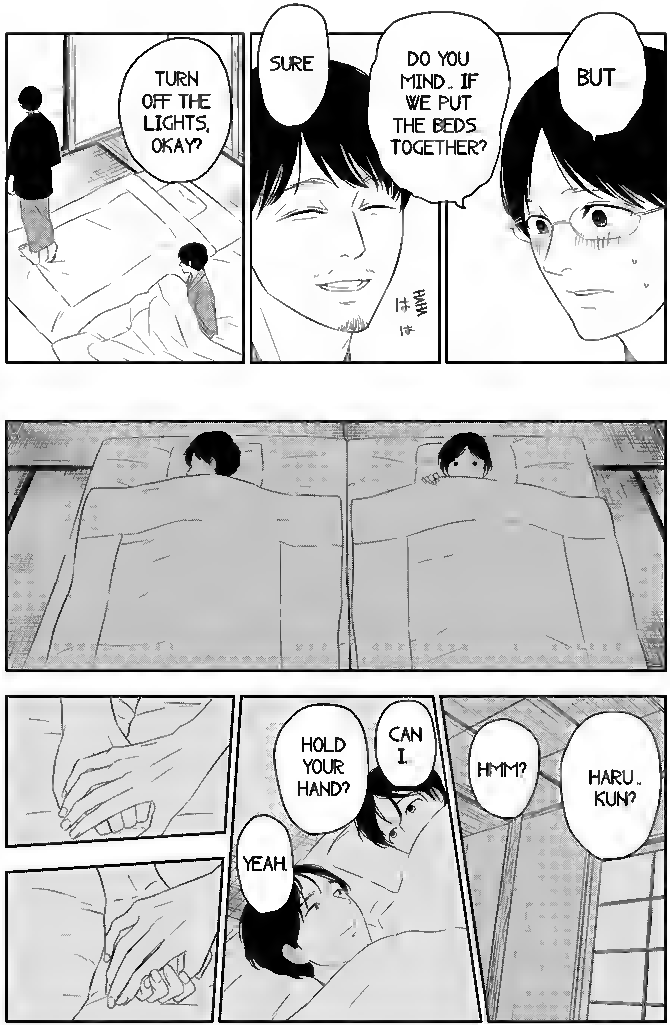
SORRY..
BUT.. IT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.. JUST BEING..
WITH YOU..
HIDE.

...
HA... RU... KUN.
YEAH
HMM?
I'M SURE YOU'RE TIRED FROM DRIVING, AND WE'RE GETTING UP EARLY TOMORROW, RIGHT?!
L-LETS GO TO SLEEP!

IT'S OKAY.
IT'S OKAY!

HIS BODY FEELS SO HOT HE COULD MELT. JUST A LITTLE CLOSER, AND THEIR HEARTS COULD BE ONE...



IN A HEARTBEAT.

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IT FELT BETTER THAN HURTING YOU BY SAYING SOMETHING.
I KNEW IT WAS GOING TO HURT YOU.
THAT'S WHY..
I'M SORRY FOR BEING SUCH A...
I WANTED US TO KEEP OUR DISTANCE, EVEN IF..
COWARD.

I FELT LIKE I COULDN'T PROPERLY RESPOND TO IT
BUT AT THE TIME..
HOW YOU FELT..
I REALIZED..
..I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IF YOU WERE REALLY SERIOUS.

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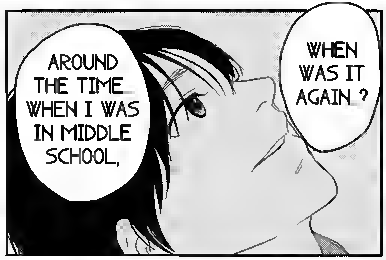
I HID ONE THING



THE TRUTH IS, BACK THEN.

BUT THIS TIME, THINGS ARE DIFFERENT.

THAT MOMENT CAME IN A HEARTBEAT

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IN A HEARTBEAT

EXTRA

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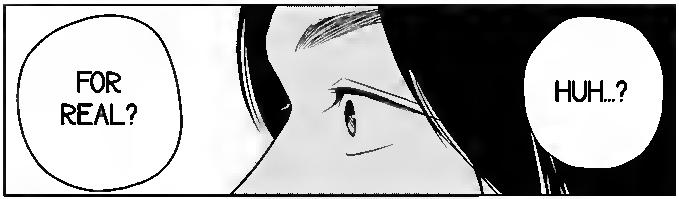
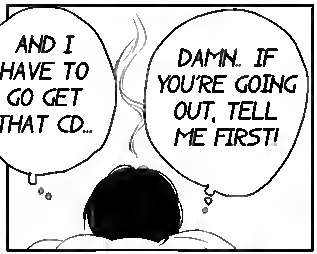
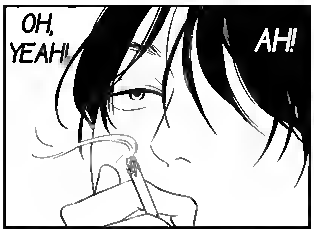


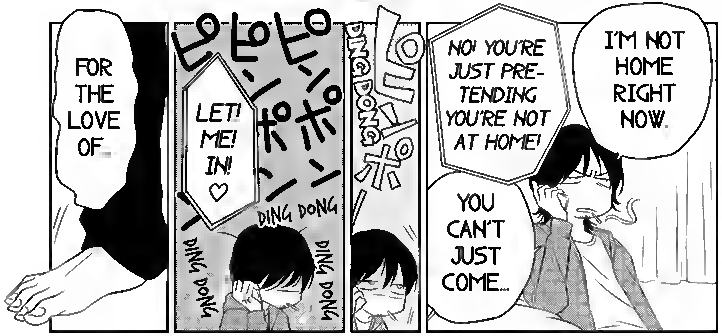
NOW I CAN'T USE GIVING "LOVE ADVICE"...

AS AN EXCUSE ANYMORE

AND MY SLIM CHANCES ARE GONE, TOO.

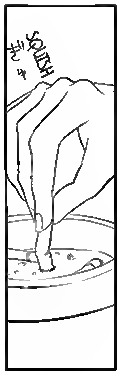


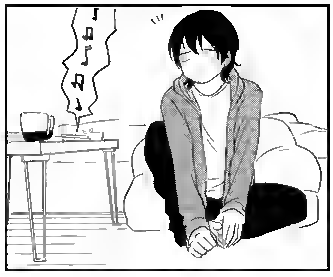




HIDE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE ME ANYMORE...

IS THAT WHY HE'S CLEARING ALL HIS DEBTS?





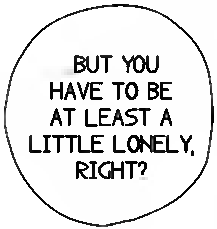
IS ONE CD ALL IT TAKES FOR HIM.

TO CLEAR EVERYTHING?

WE DIDN'T GET BACK TOGETHER IN THE FIRST PLACE...
WELL...
I'M SORRY!
HUH?
OH! OH NO, FOR REAL?

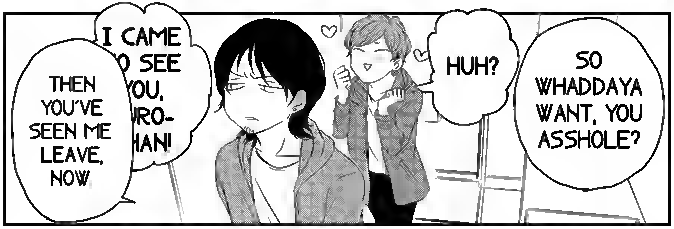
I'M THE BEST PILLOW IN THE WORLD! ♡
THEN I'LL LEND YOU MY SHOULDER TO CRY ON! ♡

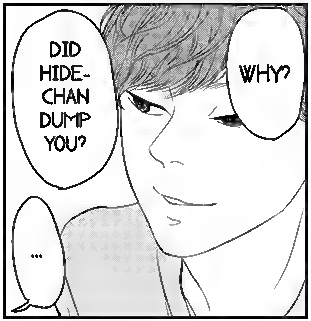
GO HOME, OKAY?
AND...
I'M GONNA GO CRY INTO MY PILLOW NOW, SO...


BUT YOU HAVE TO BE AT LEAST A LITTLE LONELY, RIGHT?

YOU'RE WELL ENOUGH TO TALK BACK AT ME
HEHE THAT'S RE-ASSURING.
I'M NOT SO WEAK I'D JUMP ON YOU, KENTA.
HHHH

HOW ARE YOU? ♡


THEN YOU'VE SEEN ME LEAVE, NOW
I CAME O SEE YOU, IRO-HAN!
HUH?
SO WHADDAYA WANT, YOU ASSHOLE?


DID HIDE-CHAN DUMP YOU?
WHY?
...

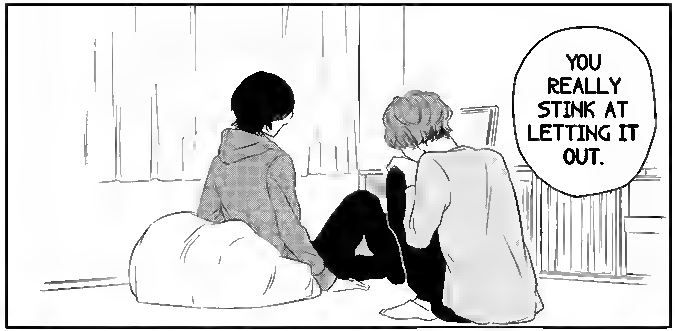
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD RIGHT NOW
PLAY WITH ME! ♡
TODAY'S MY DAY OFF, SO I'VE GOT SOME SPARE TIME!

I KNOW YOU WANT TO YOU JUST NEED TO LET IT OUT.

I COULD GO OUT WITH YOU

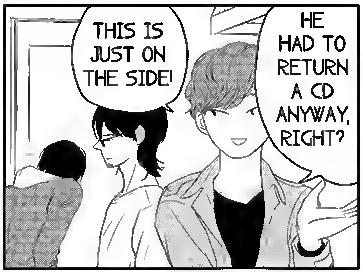
YOU'RE CUTE WHEN YOU'RE LOVESICK ♡
I MEAN,
AHH!
TEE-HEE
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW?
BECAUSE YOU FEEL SORRY FOR ME?
PHEW

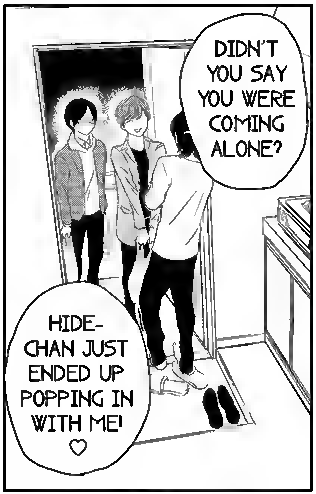
SO YOU SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME.
I'M HERE FOR YOU,
BUT JOKES ASIDE,



I GOT THE FEELING THAT IF I LET IT ALL OUT RIGHT NOW, I'D LOSE EVERYTHING.

IF I SAY I'M HEARTBROKEN, I COULD DROWN IN IT... BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE THOSE MEMORIES JUST YET.





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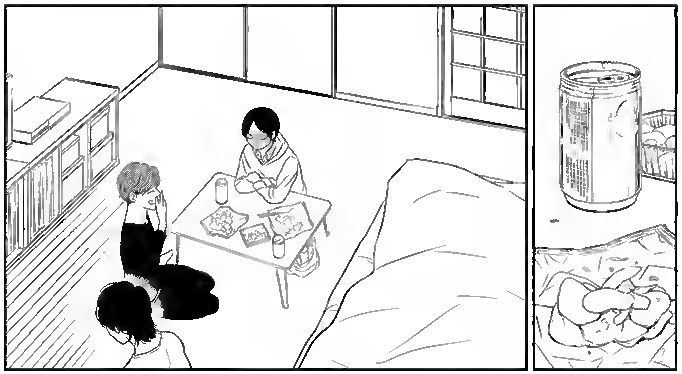

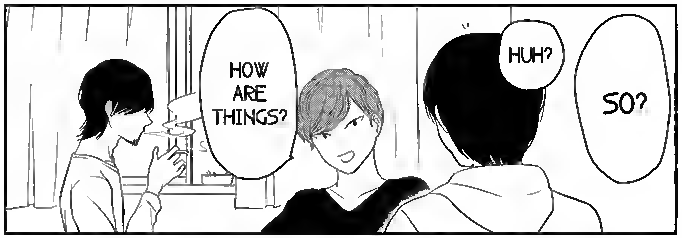

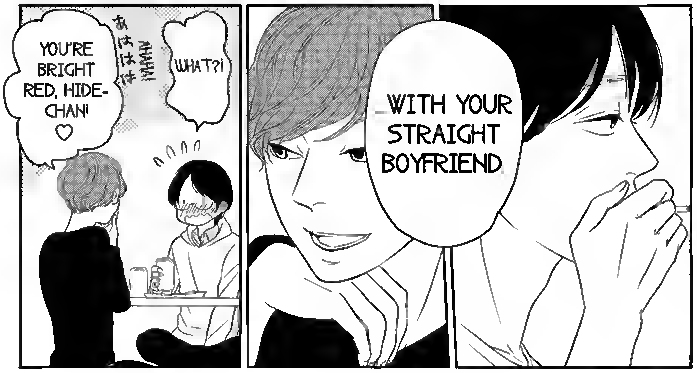

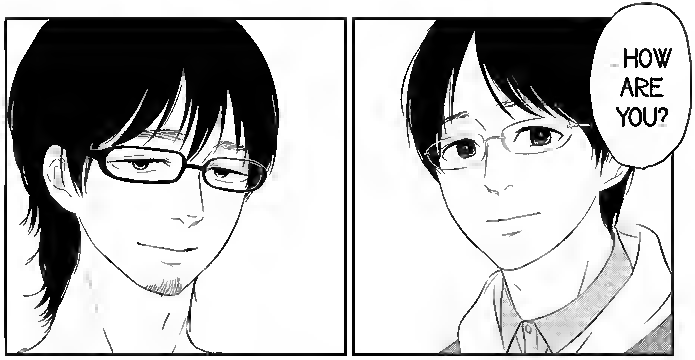

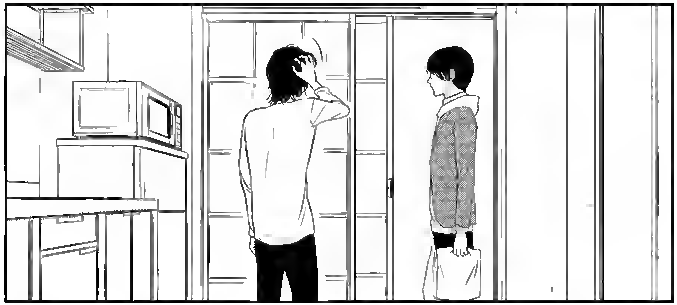

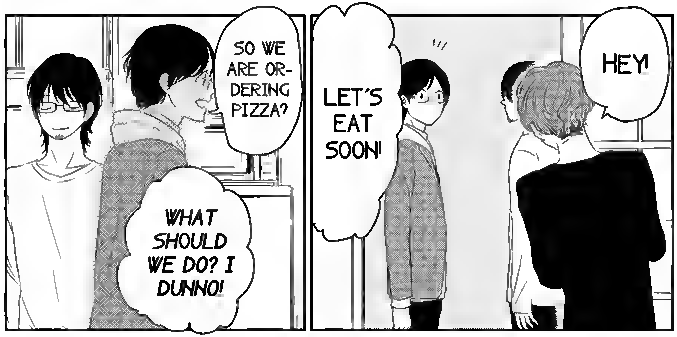

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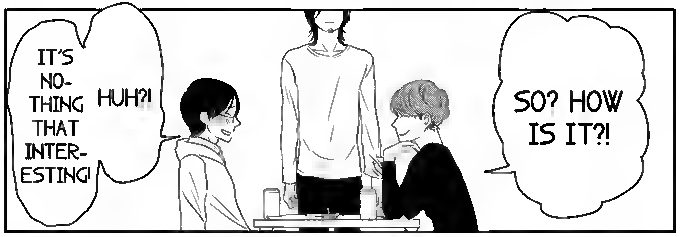
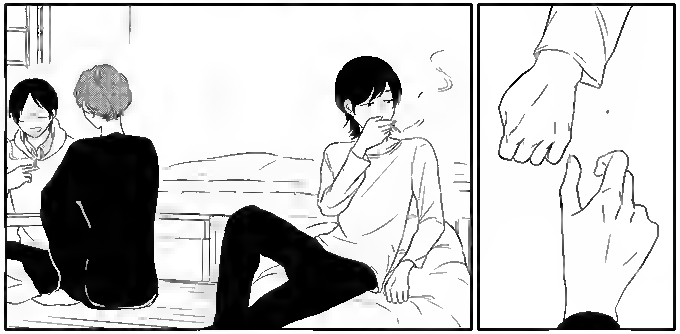
YOU CAN GO LATER.

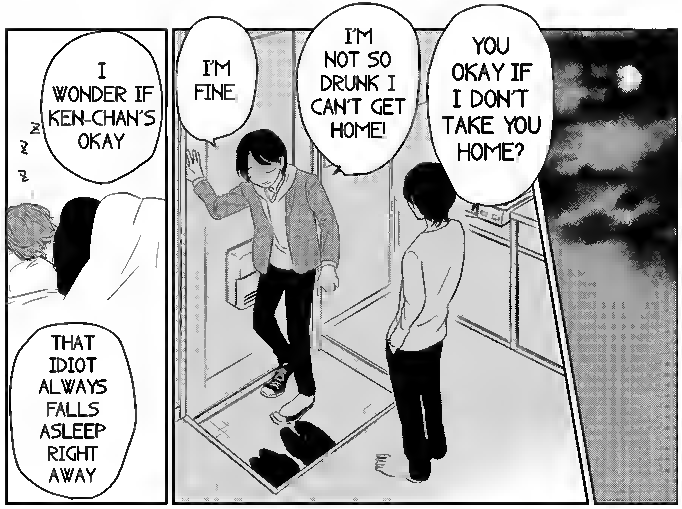

IT'S NO-THING THAT INTER-ESTING!
HUH?!
SO? HOW IS IT?!

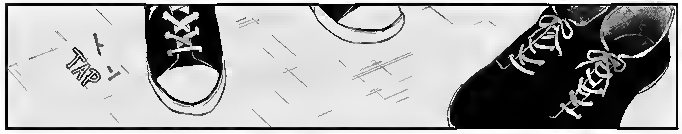


WHAT?!
I'M ASKING HOW FAR YOU'VE GONE!
N-NOR-MAL, I GUESS ?
TH-THINGS ARE.

I'LL GO BUY SOME WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SURE
DO YOU WANT MORE BOOZE?

HIDE-AKI.


I WONDER IF KEN-CHAN'S OKAY
ZZZ
THAT IDIOT ALWAYS FALLS ASLEEP RIGHT AWAY
I'M FINE.
I'M NOT SO DRUNK I CAN'T GET HOME!
YOU OKAY IF I DON'T TAKE YOU HOME?

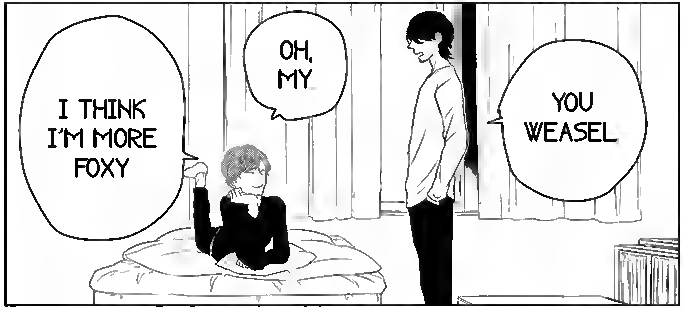

TAP
TAP

OKAY, THEN.
TAKE CARE.

NO-
THING
SORRY.

THUMP
SEE
YOU

WEL-
COME
BACK!
♡


I THINK
I'M MORE
FOXY
OH,
MY
YOU
WEASEL

WHAT
ARE YOU
TRYING
TO PULL?
HE SMOLDERS, NOT KNOWING
WHAT HIS FRIEND WANTS_

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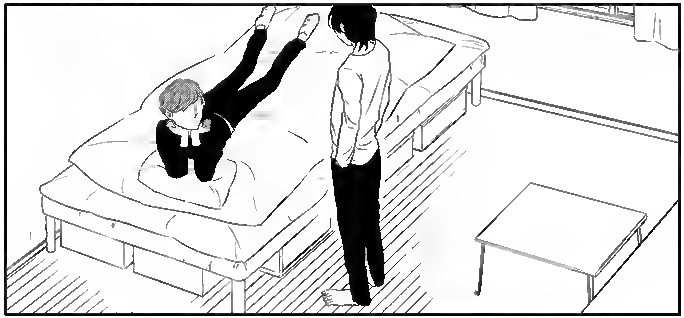

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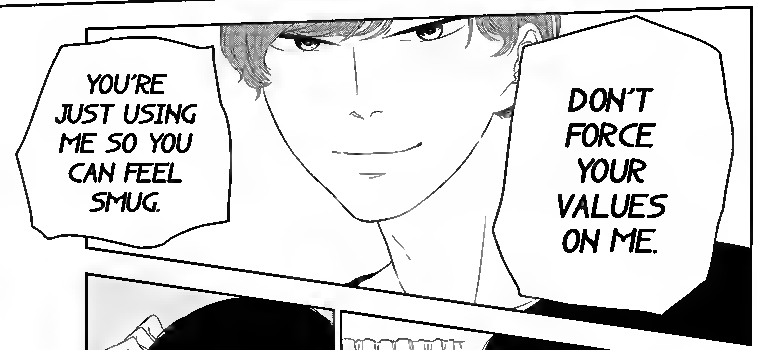

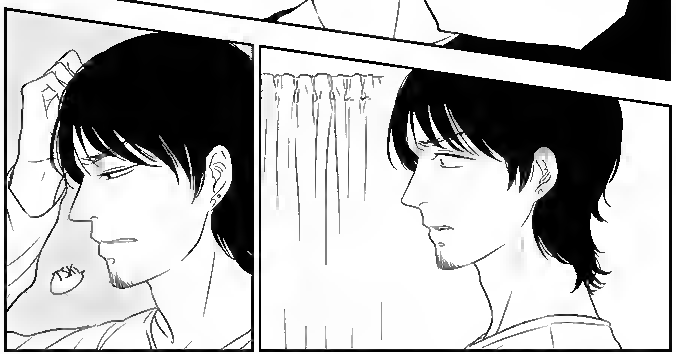

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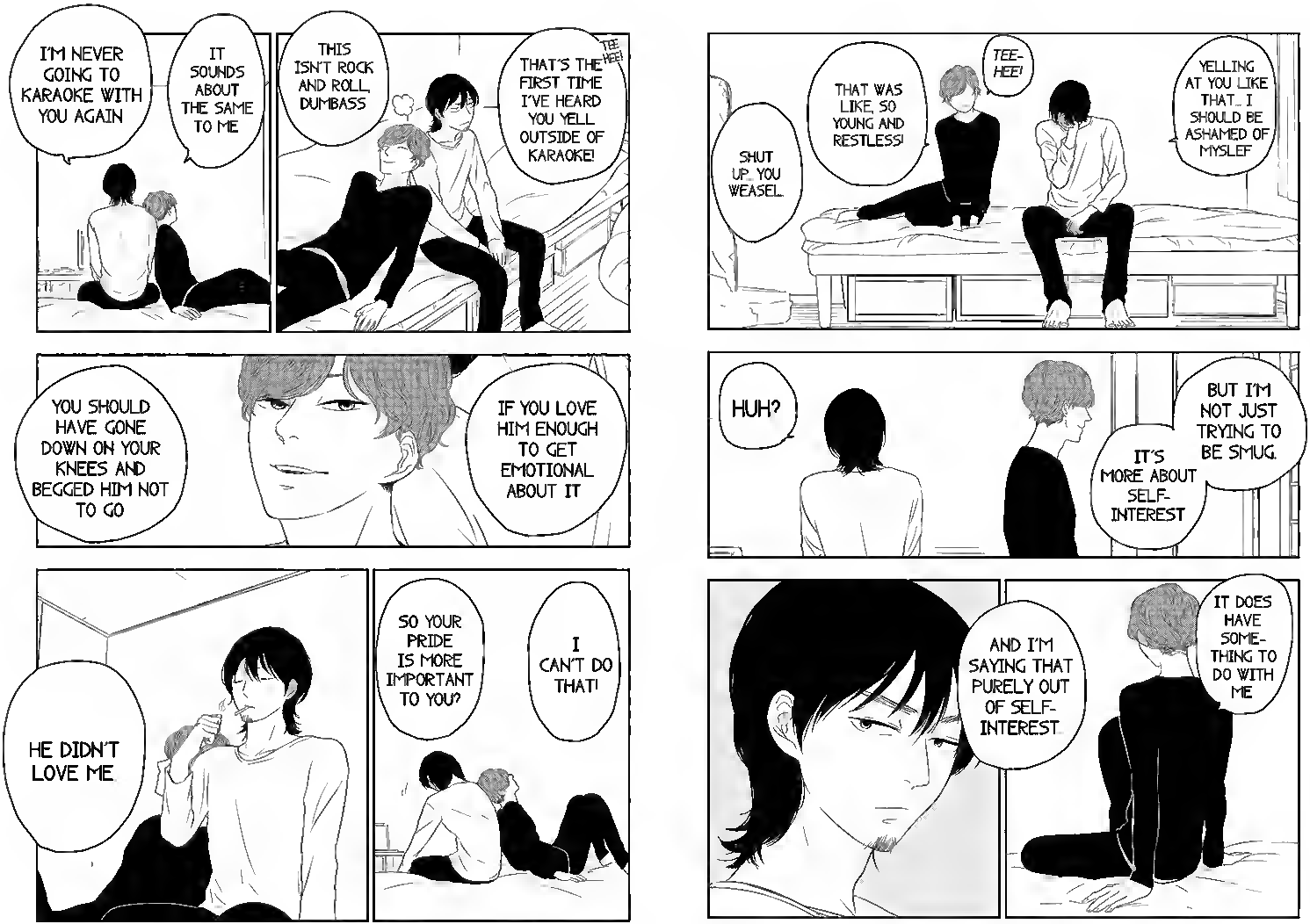
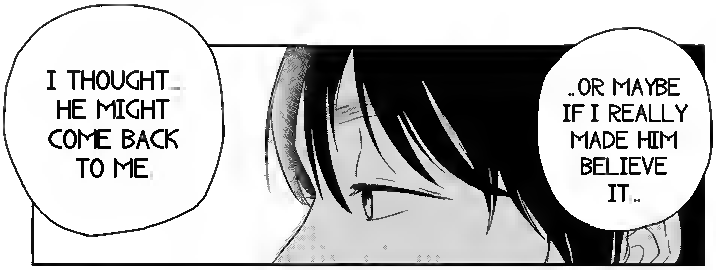
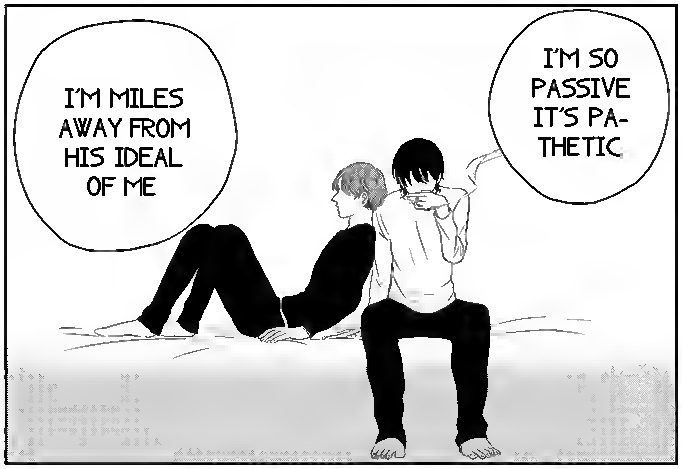

I'M NEVER GOING TO KARAOKE WITH YOU AGAIN
IT SOUNDS ABOUT THE SAME TO ME
THIS ISN'T ROCK AND ROLL, DUMBASS
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD YOU YELL OUTSIDE OF KARAOKE!
TEE HEE!
SHUT UP, YOU WEASEL.
THAT WAS LIKE, SO YOUNG AND RESTLESS!
TEE-HEE!
YELLING AT YOU LIKE THAT... I SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF MYSLEF
YOU SHOULD HAVE GONE DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND BEGGED HIM NOT TO GO
IF YOU LOVE HIM ENOUGH TO GET EMOTIONAL ABOUT IT
HUH?
IT'S MORE ABOUT SELF-INTEREST
BUT I'M NOT JUST TRYING TO BE SMUG.
HE DIDN'T LOVE ME
SO YOUR PRIDE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU?
I CAN'T DO THAT!
AND I'M SAYING THAT PURELY OUT OF SELF-INTEREST
IT DOES HAVE SOME-THING TO DO WITH ME


I THOUGHT HE MIGHT COME BACK TO ME
..OR MAYBE IF I REALLY MADE HIM BELIEVE IT..


I'M MILES AWAY FROM HIS IDEAL OF ME
I'M SO PASSIVE IT'S PA-THETIC

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR WEARING YOURSELF TO PIECES
YOU WERE EVEN AWARE THAT YOU WERE DOING IT.. YOU TRAGIC HERO
YOU COULDN'T MANAGE IT WITHOUT PRETENDING
OF COURSE A RELATION-SHIP LIKE THAT WOULD FAIL

GETTING COMFORTED WHEN HE WAS VULNERABLE AND GETTING SCOLDED WHEN HE'D SCREWED UP
WHAT HE LOVED WAS..

BECAUSE THE ALWAYS KIND, ALWAYS COMPOSED "ADULT" HAYATO KURODA WAS THERE FOR HIM

IF HE WAS GONNA LEAVE ANYWAY, I WANTED IT TO STAY LIKE THAT 'TIL THE END
...
I'M GONNA SMACK YOU
HUH? DO YOU HAVE A TWIN BY THE SAME NAME OR SOMETHING?

I'M NOT GONNA PRAISE YOU FOR THAT KINDA EFFORT
DON'T PUT ALL THAT HARD WORK INTO HURTING YOURSELF!

IF YOU'RE GONNA WORK, WORK ON BEING HAPPY!

I DON'T THINK YOUR EFFORT WAS WASTED, THOUGH.
IT MADE YOU A BETTER MAN.

YOU CAN STOP TRYING SO HARD.

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT...
AND A MAN WHO DOESN'T! ♡
YOU NEED TO SHUT YOUR TRAP.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I'M NOT A "KIND ADULT" LIKE YOU! ♡
SHUT UP!

SOMEONE IS THERE TO ACCEPT HIM. SOMEONE IS THERE TO BE WITH HIM. SOMETIMES, THAT CAN SAVE YOU.

EXTRA 4

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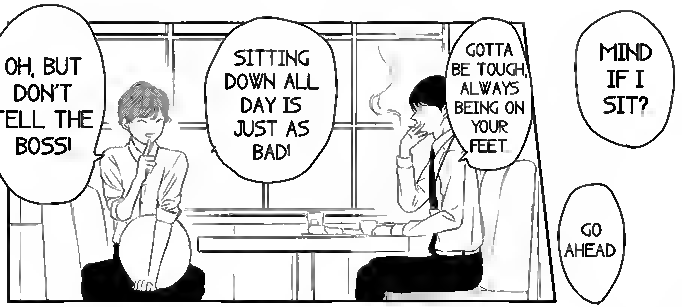
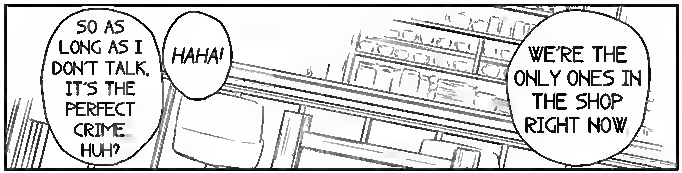
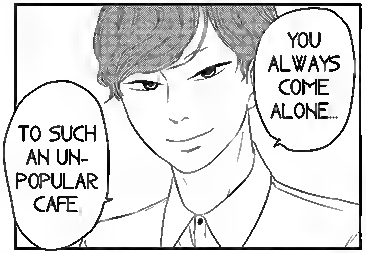
ADAPTATION BY ALEXANDRA E. SWANSON
YKS SERVICES LLC/SKY JAPAN, INC.







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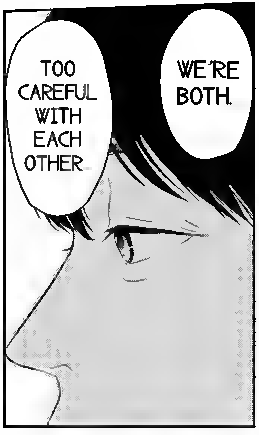
I'M NOT UNSATISFIED WITH MY SITUATION.
WHY, I WONDER...

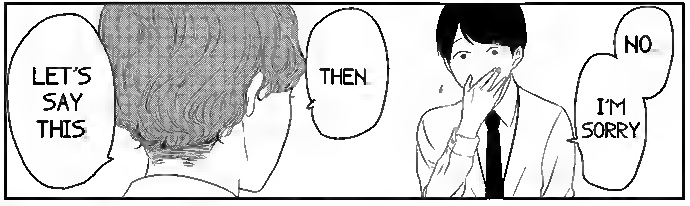
UNNATURAL SOMEHOW...
BUT IT STILL FEELS...

BUT DOES THAT "BEING CAREFUL"...
I DON'T THINK THAT'S A BAD THING.


TOO CAREFUL WITH EACH OTHER.
WE'RE BOTH.

?
OH! NO..
...

OH, I'M BOTHERING YOU
I JUST SORTA... WANT TO THINK ALONE.
IT'S NOT THAT I WANT TO BE ALONE...

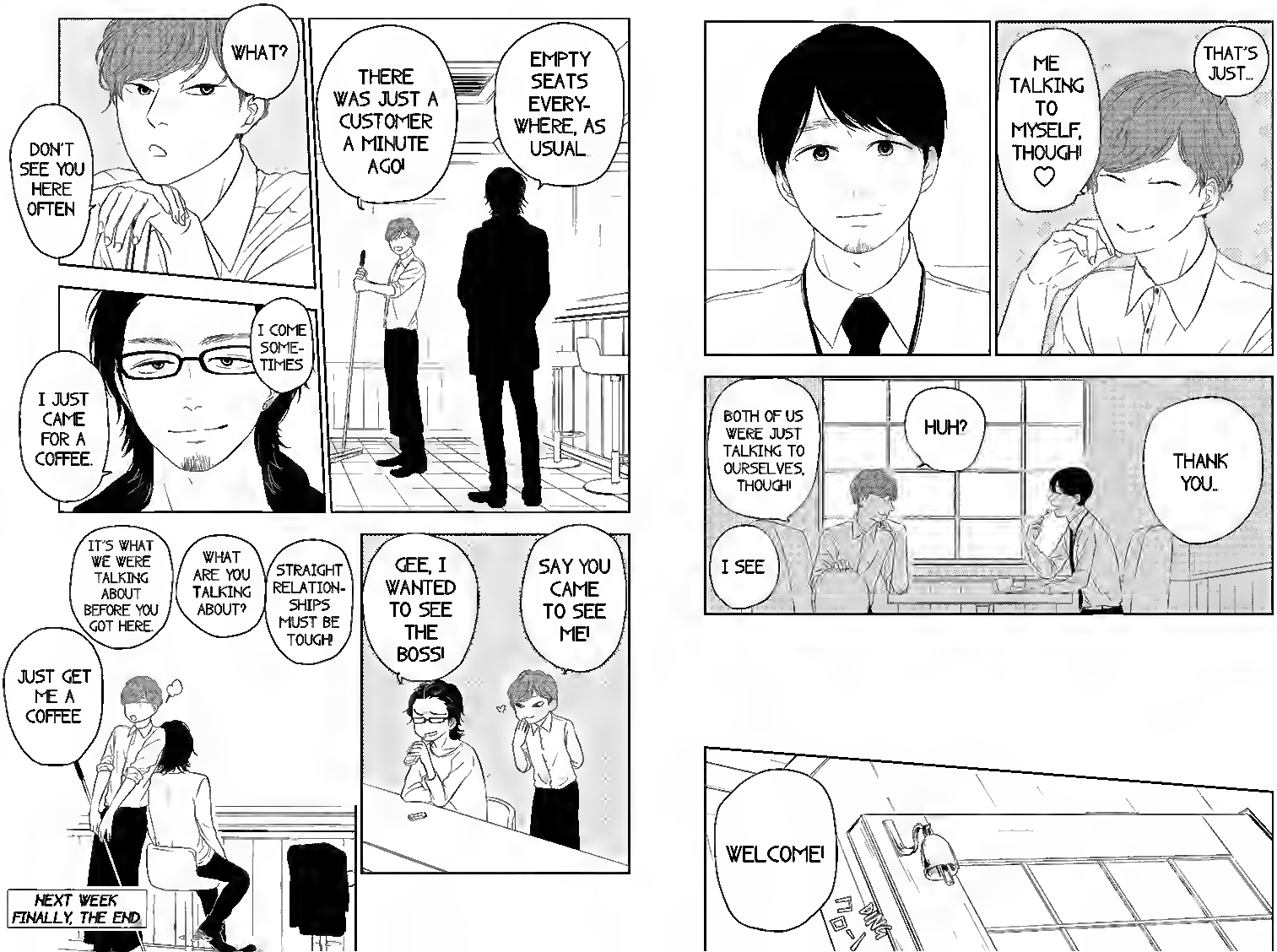

LET'S SAY THIS
THEN
NO
I'M SORRY

NOT BAD.
はは HAHA

AND YOU, THE CUSTOMER, ARE JUST TALKING TO YOURSELF.
HOW'S THAT?
I'M THE SLACKING STAFF, JUST ZONING OUT...

YOU HAVE TO TALK STRAIGHT ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT.
THINGS GET WEIRD IF YOU START MAKING GUESSES ABOUT HOW THINGS ARE GOING WITHOUT TALKING AT ALL.
YOU'RE NOT A MIND-READER YOU CAN'T SAY NOTHING AND THEN EXPECT TO COMMUNICATE 100% OF EVERY-THING
IF YOU JUST EXPECT YOUR PARTNER TO INTUITIVELY KNOW YOUR FEELINGS.
THINGS WILL JUST GET MORE MIXED UP
BUT..
SOME THINGS WILL COME TOGETHER IF YOU DO
YOU CAN'T SOLVE EVERY-THING JUST THROUGH TALKING

FEEL MORE LIKE "TAKING CARE IN ORDER TO BE LOVED"...
OR "BEING CAREFUL IN ORDER NOT TO BE HATED"?
...
YOU WERE TALKING TO YOURSELF, RIGHT?
HE HE! ;3, ;3
OH, I'M SORRY
OH DEAR, HE'S CUTE!
...
OH
OH!
HUH?
"HOW DID HE KNOW?!"
IT'S WRITTEN ON YOUR FACE
ちょいちょい
POINT POINT


WHAT?
DON'T SEE YOU HERE OFTEN
I COME SOME-TIMES
I JUST CAME FOR A COFFEE.
THERE WAS JUST A CUSTOMER A MINUTE AGO!
EMPTY SEATS EVERY-WHERE, AS USUAL
ME TALKING TO MYSELF, THOUGH! ♡
THAT'S JUST...
BOTH OF US WERE JUST TALKING TO OURSELVES, THOUGH!
HUH?
THANK YOU..
I SEE
IT'S WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT BEFORE YOU GOT HERE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
STRAIGHT RELATION-SHIPS MUST BE TOUGH!
JUST GET ME A COFFEE
GEE, I WANTED TO SEE THE BOSS!
SAY YOU CAME TO SEE ME!
NEXT WEEK FINALLY, THE END
WELCOME!
DING
ピロ-ン

MangaBox

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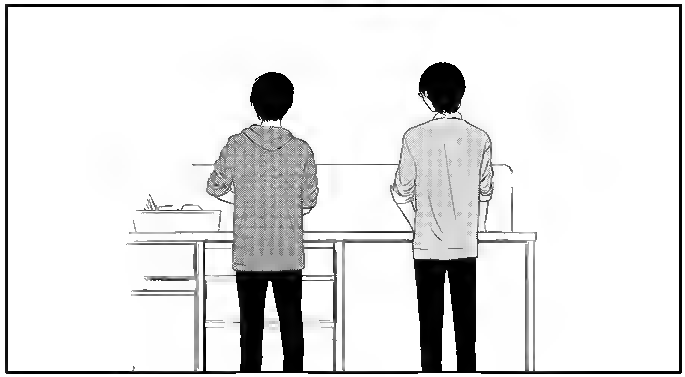
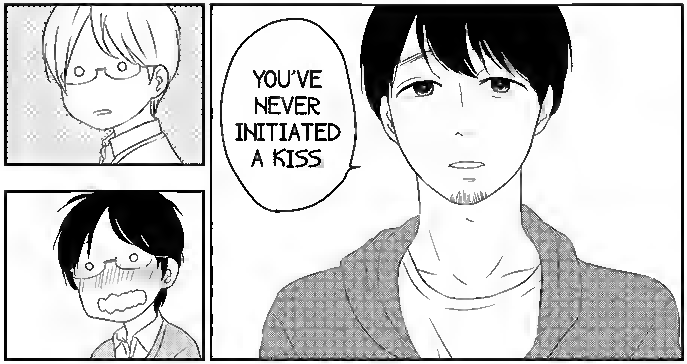
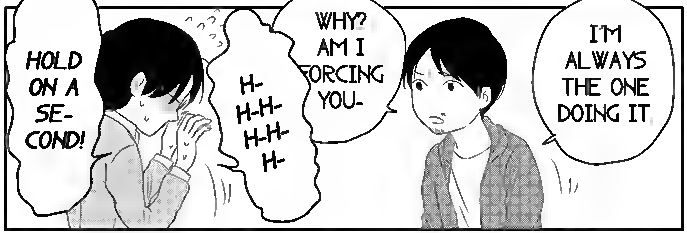
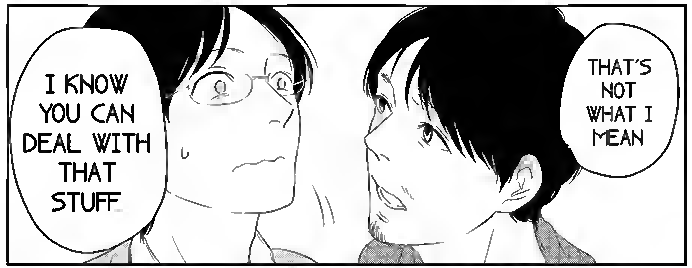
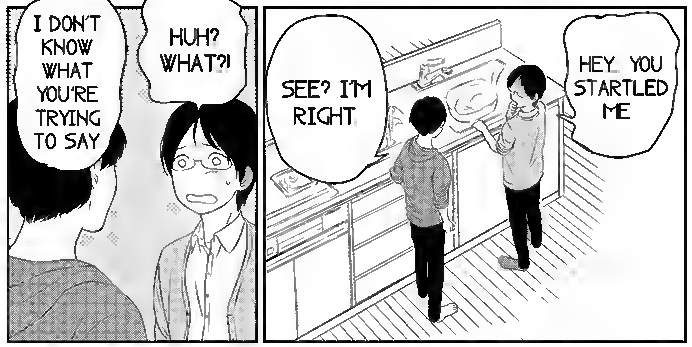


IN A HEARTBEAT FINAL CHAPTER









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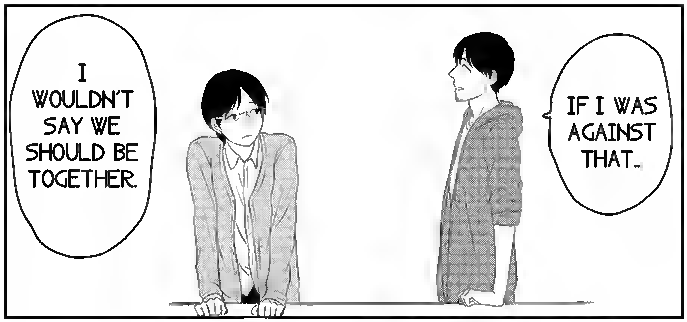
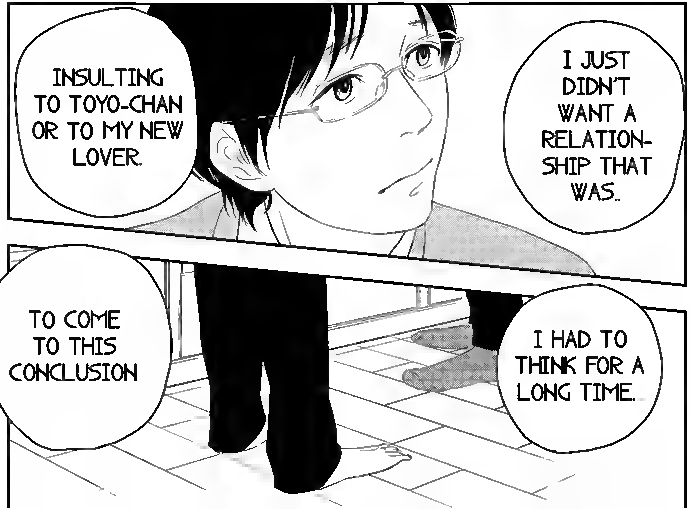
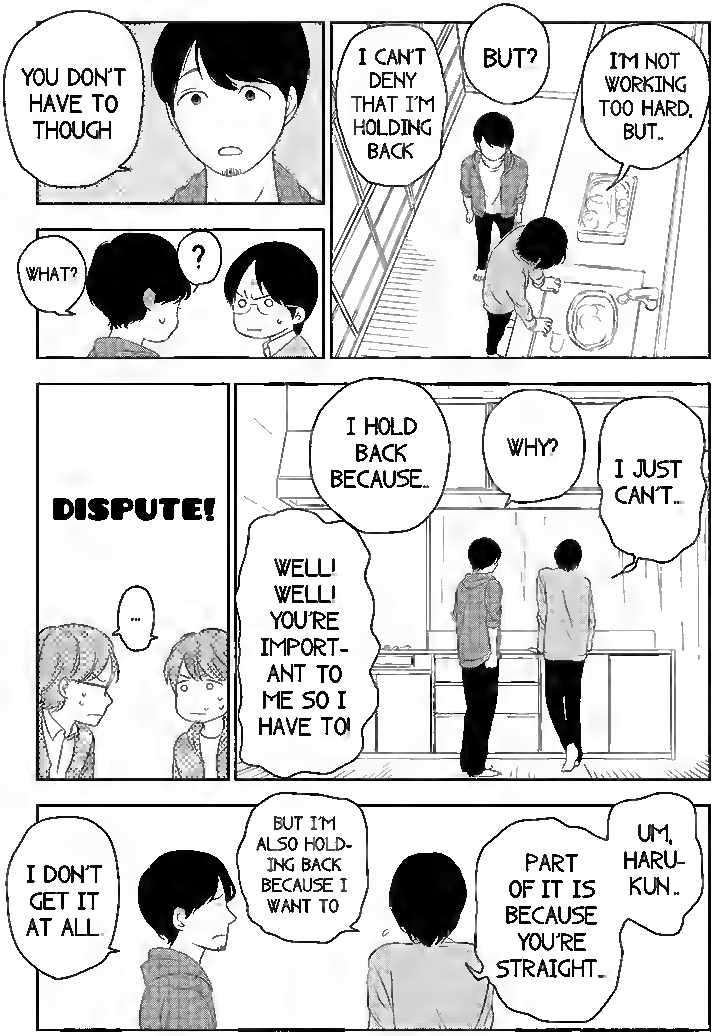

I WOULDN'T SAY WE SHOULD BE TOGETHER.
IF I WAS AGAINST THAT..

I'M OKAY IF IT'S YOU.
I SAID IT BEFORE, DIDN'T I?


INSULTING TO TOYO-CHAN OR TO MY NEW LOVER.
I JUST DIDN'T WANT A RELATION-SHIP THAT WAS..
TO COME TO THIS CONCLUSION
I HAD TO THINK FOR A LONG TIME..

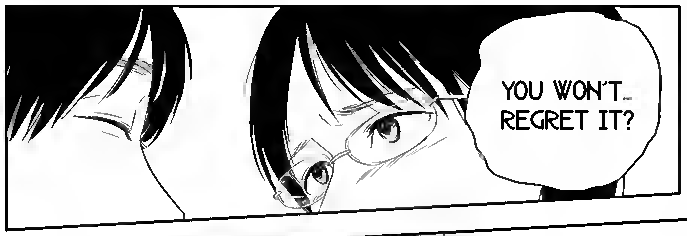
WHAT IF I HOLD YOUR HAND.. OR KISS YOU.. AND THEN..
I DON'T WANT TO SCARE YOU OFF..

LOOK..
"STEEL-ING YOUR-SELF"?
AND HAV-ING IT DONE TO YOU IS DIFFER-ENT
STEELING YOURSELF AND DOING IT..
BUT I'VE KISSED YOU

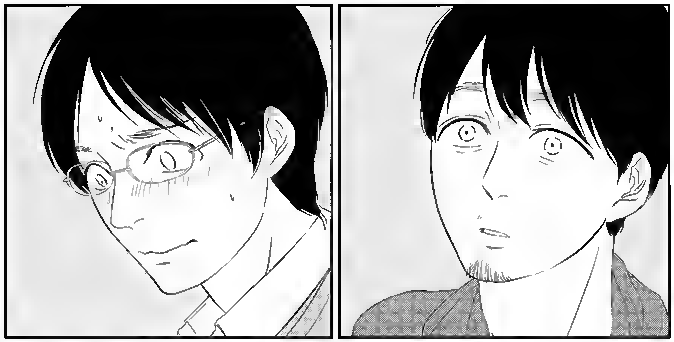

YOU DON'T HAVE TO THOUGH
I CAN'T DENY THAT I'M HOLDING BACK
BUT?
I'M NOT WORKING TOO HARD, BUT..
WHAT?
?
DISPUTE!
...
I HOLD BACK BECAUSE..
WHY?
I JUST CAN'T..
WELL! WELL! YOU'RE IMPORT-ANT TO ME SO I HAVE TO!
I DON'T GET IT AT ALL.
BUT I'M ALSO HOLD-ING BACK BECAUSE I WANT TO
PART OF IT IS BECAUSE YOU'RE STRAIGHT.
UM, HARU-KUN..

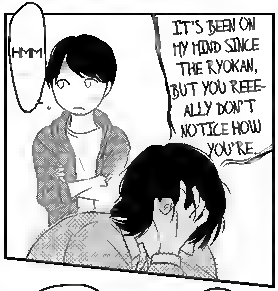
THAT YOU THINK I'M JUST CASUALLY GOING ALONG
SO I'M A LITTLE MAD
WITH WHAT YOU WANT
I'M NOT TRYING TO BLAME YOU
TH-THAT'S NOT WHAT I..
...
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU WORK TOO HARD OR HOLD BACK
YOU'VE BEEN REALLY TIMID.
IT JUST SEEMED LIKE..

EVEN SO, I WANT TO GO IN
THAT DIREC-TION

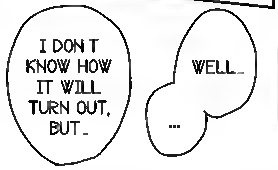

YOU WON'T... REGRET IT?

ABLE... TO STOP MYSELF
I WOULD-N'T
BE...
BECAUSE..




HMM
IT'S BEEN ON MY MIND SINCE THE RYOKAN, BUT YOU REEE-ALLY DON'T NOTICE HOW YOU'RE...

LOOK! YOU DON'T EVEN NOTICE!
AGH!
IS IT THAT BAD?


I DON T KNOW HOW IT WILL TURN OUT, BUT..
WELL...
...

DADDY...
I WANT SOME WATER
HMM? HMM? WHAT HAPPENED?
WA-TER!

THANK YOU FOR READING!